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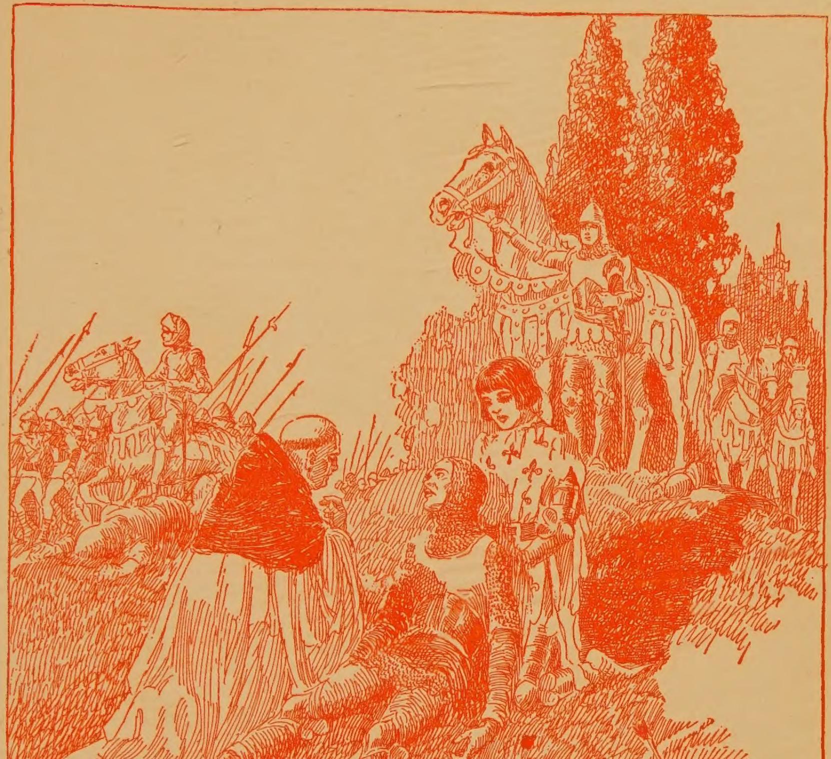

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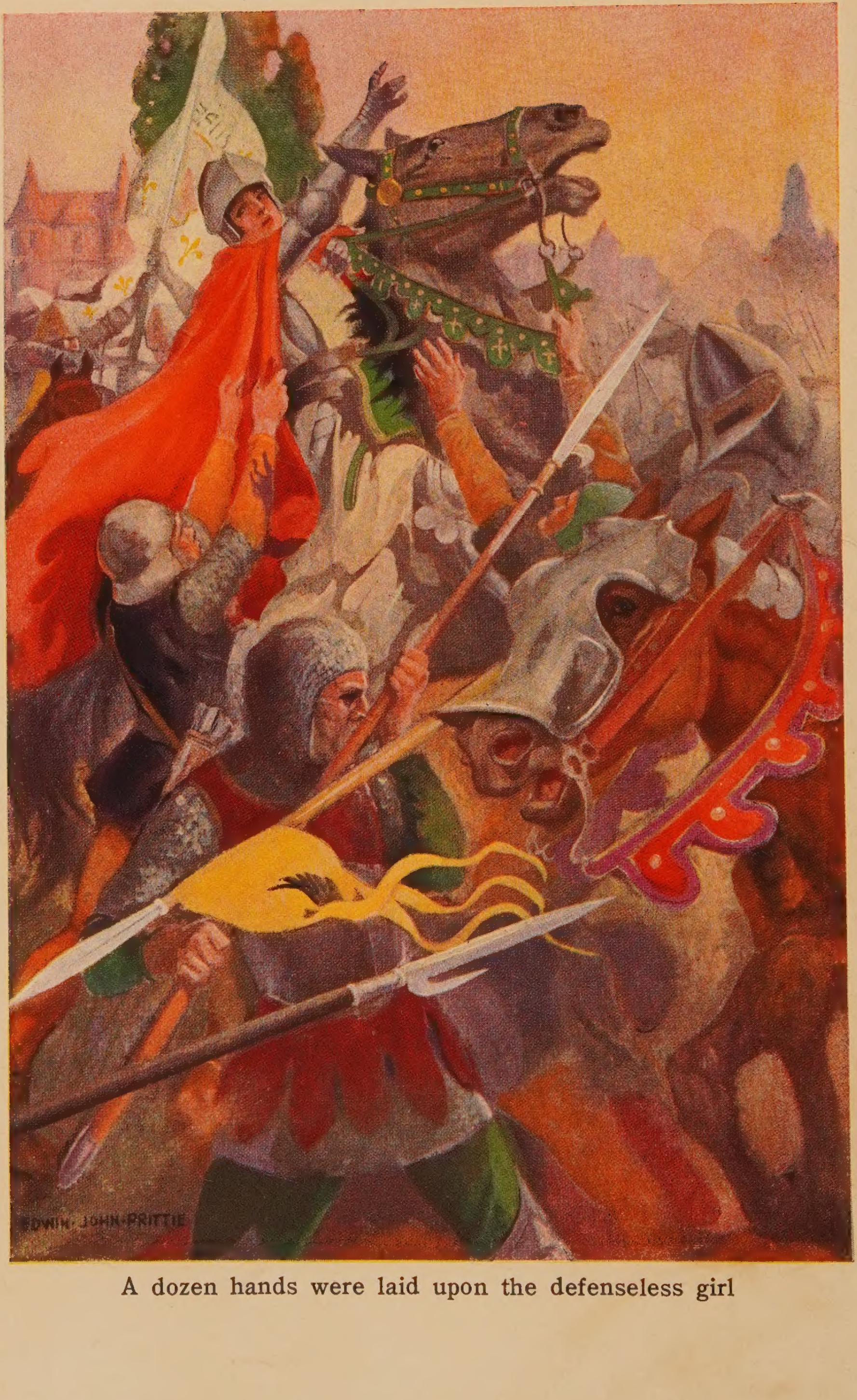
EDWIN · JOHN · PRITTIE

A dozen hands were laid upon the defenseless girl

Joan of Arc

THE LIFE STORY OF THE MAID OF ORLÉANS

BY

MABEL DODGE HOLMES

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY

EDWIN JOHN PRITTIE

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Joan of Arc

PREFACE

DETAILS of background and all statements of historical fact in this book are authentic. So far as it is possible for a modern to interpret medieval character, the attempts at character delineation aim at truth, and are based on fact rather than on imagination. In the chapters where information is conveyed by means of dialogue, the dialogue is, of course, imaginary, though it is, the author hopes, consistent with the character of the speakers as far as known. In particular, the chapters of which the scene is laid at Domremy (Chapters I to VI and Chapter XXX) are examples of this use of imaginary dialogue. The facts so conveyed, however, are based on authentic history and are true. Elsewhere, except in a few unimportant passages, the words of Jeanne in this book are her actual words. This is entirely so in the chapters that deal with the trial.

The maps of Orléans and Compiègne have been modified from those of Francis C. Lowell; the others have been constructed by the author.

M. D. H.

Philadelphia

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INTRODUCTION

OUT of the mist of fifteenth century wars and plots steps the fresh young figure of Joan of Arc. Although only a peasant girl, unable to read or write, not beautiful, nor supported by anyone of rank or influence, yet she has stood ever since among the truly great women of history.

The famous French poetess of her own time, Christine de Pisan, praised her in the last poem she wrote. The English commander, on the other hand, stung by defeat, could explain her success only by believing her a witch, or worse. Since that time a whole library of books has grown up around her short and strange career. Every incident in her life, every trait in her character, everything she ever said or that was said about her by her friends or enemies has been made the subject of study and writing. One of the great French learned societies has gathered all the testimony given at her trial and many other contemporary documents, and published them in five thick volumes. Her life has been written by scholars and popular writers of France, England, Germany, the United States, and other countries. Anatole France, Gabriel Hanotaux, Andrew Lang, and Mark Twain are only a few of her distinguished modern biographers. Her picturesque journey across France, the romantic months of warfare, her later adventures and the thrilling climax of her life have been the subject of some of the world's best known dramas from Schiller to Bernard Shaw.

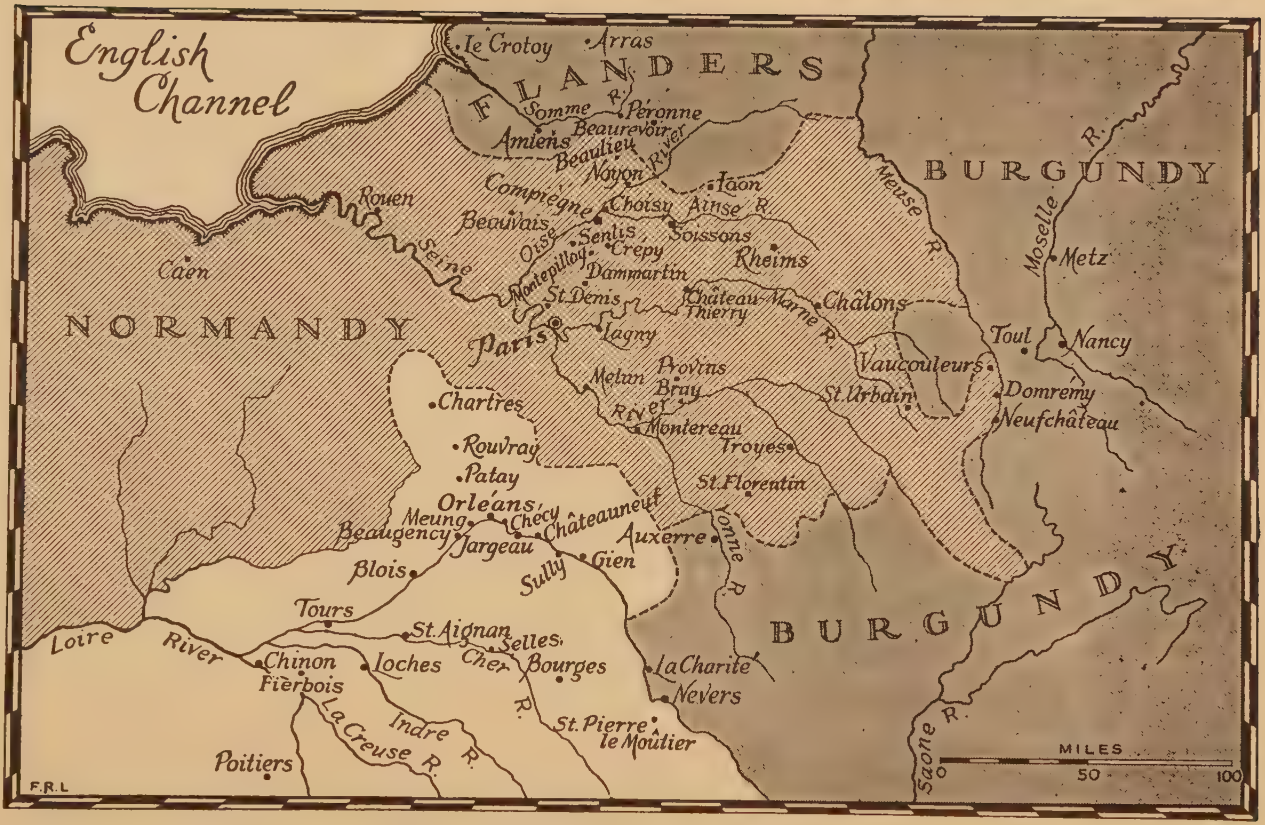
Every year now, on the eighth of May, the anniversary of her first success, all France flutters with blue and white flags in her honor. Her supposed birthplace at Domremy is a shrine for thousands of visitors, and there are statues of her there and at Chinon, Orléans, Rheims, Rouen, Paris, and elsewhere where any events of her life took place. She is one of the few heroes or heroines that are such in the eyes of all peoples. Nobody has anything but good to say of her. Her simple faith in her mission to save France from its invaders and to put the rightful king on his throne, her courage, even her momentary loss of faith when her "voices" seemed to desert her, are all so human, so attractive, so unusual, that they win all hearts.

The task of discovering how far Joan's visions were due to her own imagination, of explaining how much of her success was due to the changing circumstances of the time and how much to her genius, of writing still more learned works about her, may be left to the learned scholars. It is, after all, herself and the people and things that surrounded her, what she was like and what she said and did, that the life of Joan of Arc means to most of us, and it is a book of this kind that the author has written. There are few persons who lived so long ago about whose daily life we know so much and yet whose daily life was so full of incident. It is the story of this personal daily life that is here given.

If anyone who reads this book will look at Jules Bréton's picture called "The Lark," either as it hangs in its place in the Chicago Art Gallery, or as it is often reproduced, he will see my ideal of Joan of Arc. It is a picture of a stocky French girl stopping her work for a moment, sickle in hand, her head lifted to watch and listen to a lark singing as he rises higher and higher to the sky. Busy about the common duties of life, but not too busy to see the beauty and the wonder of common things, the little girl of the lark, like Joan herself, might well see visions.

E. P. Cheyney

University of Pennsylvania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La Creuse R.
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France during the lifetime of Jeanne d'Arc

CHAPTER I

THE SHEPHERDESS OF DOMREMY

ON a sunny afternoon in early summer, three little girls sat on a grassy hillside above a peacefully flowing river. Two of them held their distaffs and were busily spinning. The third, younger than the others, was weaving into a wreath the wildflowers she had gathered. All three were dressed in red woolen skirts and coarse white blouses. Their feet were bare.

Near by, scattered about in the blossoming green meadow, grazed fat, well-fed brown cattle and sturdy little black and white goats with glossy hair. One of the girls, whose face was more thoughtful than those of the others, looked up from her spinning every little while to see that none of the animals wandered away; for these cows and goats made up the flock of all the people of the village, and it was her father's turn to take care of them.

Beyond the meadow lay a group of small stone cottages with thatched roofs. This was the village

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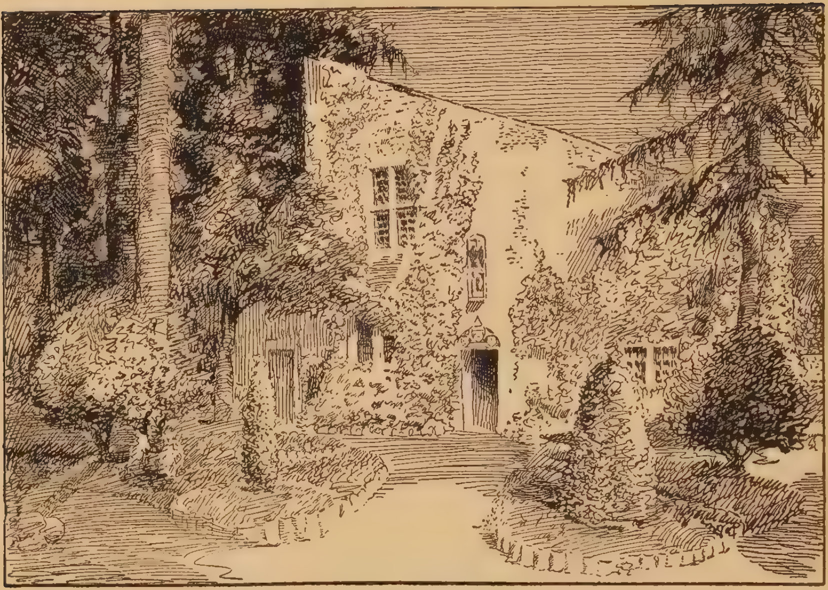
Key to Pronunciation.—Pronunciations are in accordance with the following key, taken from THE WINSTON SIMPLIFIED DICTIONARY:

āte, sen**ā̇**te, r**â**re, c**ă**t, **ȧ**sk, f**ä**r, **å**ffect, comm*ȧ*; sc**ē**ne, **ė**vent, **ĕ**dge, writ**ẽ**r, nov**ė**l; m**ī**ne, beg**ĭ**n; c**ō**ld, **ȯ**bey, c**ô**rd, d**ô**g, st**ŏ**p, c**ȯ**mpare; **ū**nit, circ**ū**late, b**û**rn, c**ŭ**t, foc**ů**s; m**o͞o**n, f**o͝o**t; m**ou**nd; c**oi**n; **g**old; **j**ewel; **y**ellow; si**ng**; **ch**ild; **th**in; *th*en; **hw**, *wh*en; **zh**, a*z*ure; **ü**, Ger. f*ü*r or Fr. l*u*ne; **ö**, Ger. sch*ö*n or Fr. f*eu*; **ṅ**, Fr. e*n*fa*n*t or no*m*; **kh**, Ger. a*ch* or mi*ch*, or Sc. lo*ch*.



The home of Jeanne d'Arc at Domremy

of Domremy.[1] The gentle river was the Meuse,[2] flowing between the low hills of eastern France to join at last the Rhine. And the thoughtful-looking little girl was named Jeannette d'Arc.[3] The year was 1423, and Jeannette was eleven years old.

"But suppose the soldiers should come today!" said Mengette,[4] laying down her distaff with a frightened glance behind her at the thick forest of oak trees that covered the top of the hill and stretched away back of the village. "My father says the roads are full of them, hungry and idle, wandering about. What should we do with the flock?"

---

[1] dôṅ-rā-mē′.

[2] möz.

[3] zhȧ-nĕt′ dȧrk.

[4] mĕn-jĕt′.

"We should send Hauviette[1] running to the other meadow to call our fathers and brothers, and you and I would pray to Our Lady. No harm would come to us," answered Jeannette quietly.

"Dear Jeannette!" cried Hauviette. "You are always so brave!"

"But does the Blessed Mother always hear you?" asked Mengette doubtfully. "It is good to pray; but I should feel safer if my father were near."

"Tomorrow you shall go with me to the chapel of Our Lady of Bermont,[2] the little shrine deep in the woods. It is so still there that you can hear God's voice. And we must take bread crumbs with us, for there the birds will come and eat out of our hands."

"There are wolves in the forest," objected Mengette.

"And grandmother says there are dragons that lie hidden there," shivered little Hauviette.

"That is only a foolish tale to be told a child," said Jeannette, smiling. "There are no dragons any more. Saint Michael killed the last one long ago. As for the wolves, they prowl only at night."

"But soldiers prowl in the day," persisted Mengette, "and I am afraid of them, for all your prayers. It is better, if the soldiers come, to have time to flee to the island."

She spoke of an island in the river, just opposite the village, where stood a deserted fortress that had

[1] ō-vē-yĕt′.

[2] bẽr-mâṅ′.

once been the home of the lords of Bourlemont.[1] This family now lived in the great castle of Bourlemont, with its six towers that rose against the sky to the south of Domremy. Jeannette's father, her grown-up brother Jacques,[2] and five other chief men of the village had leased the island fortress, so as to have a place of refuge when wandering bands of soldiers raided the village, seeking to carry off the cattle. Several times within the children's memory, the bells had rung and everyone had hurried to drive the flocks to the safety of the island.

"Why are there always so many soldiers?" asked little Hauviette. She had finished her wreath and was gathering in a little basket some of the wild strawberries that grew ripe and red in the grass.

"Because the great lords will not live at peace with each other, and send their men out to fight each other," said Jeannette sadly.

"And when there is no money to pay the soldiers of the king—the poor young king, who cannot sit upon his throne!—they go away in companies and turn robbers upon the highways," added Mengette.

"Poor soldiers!" said the sympathetic Hauviette. "I suppose they are hungry, too. It must be dreadful to be hungry." She ate another strawberry.

The quiet chatter of the children was interrupted by angry shouts, which, however, did not seem to alarm them.

[1] bo͞orl-moṅ.

[2] zhȧk.

"The boys are coming home," cried Jeannette. "It is time to drive in the flock."

"Yes, let us go quickly and see how the fighting went today," agreed Mengette, gathering up her distaff.

Together the three girls herded the flock and drove them toward the village common, where their owners would come to claim them, as well as the sheep which had been grazing there all day. As they reached the path leading upward from the river, they met a noisy group of boys of about their own age, some younger, some older, clattering along in their wooden shoes. All were talking loudly; some were shaking clenched fists in the direction of the little town of Maxey,[1] across the river, where every day they went to school. One lad was bleeding from a cut across the cheek; one had a badly swollen eye; the smock of the smallest boy was torn in two places. At this smallest boy Jeannette looked in horror.

"Pierre,[2] Pierre!" she cried, "and have you, too, been quarreling? What will our mother say? Jean,"[3] turning to a tall boy older than herself, "why is it that you did not keep your brother out of danger?"

"How was I to keep my eyes on him, set upon as we were by those rascally Burgundians?" growled Jean d'Arc.*

[1] mȧk-sā′. [2] py-âr. [3] zhȧn.

* *Jean* (John) is the masculine French name of which *Jeanne* (Joan) and *Jeannette* are the feminine forms.

"Well, I must just try to mend the rents in his poor clothes," sighed Jeannette. "Now that Jacques is too old for the school, there is no one to watch the little Pierre."

"Were you beaten?" Mengette was asking meanwhile of the angry group.

"Not beaten, but for the time driven back," answered the boy whose cheek was cut. "Armagnacs[1] are never beaten."

The name which he used to describe the warlike little group was that of the political party in France which held loyally to the king. It was named for one of the nobles who had led that party. All the people of Domremy loved their king, and believed he ought to have the throne which his enemies at this time had taken away from him. But the people of Maxey, across the river, lived on land that belonged to the great Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful of all the French nobles, who led the party opposed to the king, and was friendly with the English. So the people of Maxey called themselves Burgundians as the party was called; and every day the two groups of schoolboys waged a little war of their own.

Driving the flock and leading her tattered little brother by the hand, Jeannette made her way into the village. Beyond the common, having left behind the responsibility of all the animals but her own, she passed down the straggling street, an erect, sturdy little figure in her homespun gown. Villagers greeted her from the door yards of the low stone cottages that stood on either side of the cobbled road. The houses were vine-covered, steep-roofed, with bright flowers making gay patches of color on the thatch, and roses growing on the wall.

---

[1] är-män-yäk′.

At the door of the little gray stone church with its tall, square tower stood the sexton. Jeannette stopped to speak to him, drawing from the pocket of her apron a large round cake, such as it was her custom to bring him every day.

"This is to remind you of the bell for Angelus[1]," she said as she handed it to him.

"Ah, well, I rang it promptly and long last night for you," he answered.

"Not for me, my friend. For the good God and our patron Saint Remy[2]—though I love to hear the bells," she added honestly.

At the house next the church Jeannette called a cheery good-by to her companions and turned into the garden. It was quite a large garden; rosebushes bloomed pink and white, and flower beds and a vegetable patch lay on either side of a sparkling brook that danced its way along. Fruit trees gave a pleasant shade. The house itself had a slanting roof of flat stones and boasted one or two windows, which let in very little light, however. On one side of the door was the woodpile, on the other a heap of

[1] An evening prayer.

[2] sâṅ rê-mē′.

farming tools, for Jeannette's father was a small farmer, and every day drove his horses out to work in the fields. He rose now from the bench against the outer wall to lead the cow and the goat to the shed adjoining the house. Jeannette, followed by her brothers, Jean and Pierre, went into the house to help her mother prepare the evening meal.

Chapter II

BY THE FIRE AT NIGHT

SUPPER, a simple meal of black bread, lentils, and goats' milk, was over. The early summer evening was cool, and a fire blazed on the wide stone hearth in the deep chimney place. The soft breeze that blew in at the barred, unglazed windows would presently be shut out, when dark came on, by heavy wooden shutters, which protected folk inside from prowling beasts or wandering vagabonds.

Jeannette's bare feet made no noise on the hard earthen floor as she stepped back and forth across the one large room that was her home. She was putting away in the cupboard the few pewter dishes that stood on the rough wooden table. The copper pots and pans she had already scoured and hung under the chimney piece.

Besides the table, there was very little furniture in the room. At mealtime, father and mother had each a stool to sit on, and there was a bench along each side of the table for the children. In the corners were the beds where father and mother and the two girls slept. The three boys had their pallets in the attic, which they climbed to by a ladder against the wall at one end of the room. On either side of the hearth was a high-backed bench, or settle; and on one of these now sat Jeannette's mother, with little Pierre on a pile of rushes at her feet, looking into the leaping flames. Jacques and Jean were outside milking the cow and the goat, Catharine was feeding the chickens, and the tired father smoked his pipe in the sunset light on the bench outside the door.

Presently, their evening tasks finished, Jeannette and Catharine went to sit down beside their mother. It was a time that Jeannette loved dearly; for it was at this evening hour that the mother, deeply religious, taught her children from her stock of prayers and creeds and stories of the saints. Her teaching was all the schooling her daughters had; for, although the boys were sent to school, it was not thought necessary for peasant girls to be taught anything more than household tasks and religious duties.

Jeannette and her sister already knew how to say "Our Father," "Hail, Mary!" and the Apostles' Creed, which begins, "I believe in God." Little Pierre knew the first two, and tonight the girls were interested in hearing his earnest efforts to learn the creed. When he had mastered it as far as "to judge the quick and the dead," his mother said the lesson was finished, and all three children settled themselves for the story that would follow.

"Of what, then, shall I tell tonight?" asked Isabelle d'Arc.

"Saint Margaret," said Jeannette.

"You always ask for that," complained Catharine. "Let us hear of Saint Remy."

"You are right," said their mother. "It is long since we have talked of the patron saint of our village, who so kindly cares for us. Well, once upon a time—" and she went on to tell them of the great missionary priest who, in the fifth century, baptized King Clovis and established Christianity in France. The city of his especial care was Rheims,[1] where in the great cathedral all the kings of France since Clovis had been crowned; but he also cared for the little town of Domremy, which, like Rheims, was honored in bearing his name.

The birth of Saint Remy, Dame Isabelle told her children, was foretold by angels, and he was specially chosen by a sign from heaven to be bishop of Rheims. When King Clovis desired to be baptized, there appeared, she said, in answer to the bishop's prayers, a snow-white dove carrying a flask full of holy oil sent from heaven. With this, Clovis and every king of France since then had been anointed at the time when he was crowned. By a miracle, the flask remained always full.

"But our poor young king," she ended with a sigh, "has been neither anointed nor crowned. His city of Rheims is in the hands of the enemy, and till he can enter it he is not really king."

A cheerful voice was heard outside greeting Jacques d'Arc, and presently the good man came in, bringing Father Frontey,[1] the parish priest, a familiar visitor in every village home. The two men sat down at the table and were soon deep in talk. Jean and Jacques came in yawning; with little Pierre they climbed the ladder to their attic beds. Mother and daughters drew out their knitting, and their busy fingers flew.

---

[1] râṅs.

But Jeannette was not only knitting; she was listening to her father and the good priest, as they talked of affairs in France. A traveler through the village that day had brought news of the world outside their valley.

"The Dauphin, they say, is about to give battle to the English," said Father Frontey.

"Now that the English have lost their warlike king," answered Jacques d'Arc, "perhaps our arms may be successful. Though our king is so young, they say he is wise, and earnest to win."

"It may be so. He has bad counselors. God send a speedy quarrel between the English leaders and the Duke of Burgundy. 'Tis said King Charles hopes to win him over."

"I doubt it—I doubt it much. Though he was but a boy, King Charles was on the bridge of Montereau[2] when his men, all Armagnacs, treacherously murdered Duke Philip's father. The Duke has vowed revenge; he will not forgive."

"And what of La Hire?"[3] The priest spoke of a nobleman both brave and terrible, who, at the head of the Armagnac soldiers in that region, was spreading destruction through all the countryside. Apparently making war on the Burgundians, he was really seeking gain and plunder for himself and his men.

---

[1] frŏṅ-tā′.

[2] môṅt-rō′.

[2] lȧ ēr.

"La Hire moves westward, burning churches as he goes. What is to save us if he comes this way?"

"Money," said the priest drily. "Money, if we can find it, to pay one of these great lords for his protection."

Jacques d'Arc looked grave. He was at this time dean of the village, in charge of all community matters, responsible for law and order, responsible also for the collection of taxes, a hard matter in a poverty-stricken country. How could he wring more money from his people? They were already burdened with labor to be done for the Lady of Bourlemont, to whom they paid their taxes in hay and firewood and meat for the castle table.

In the silence Jeannette laid down her knitting and approached Father Frontey. Her own father she would not interrupt in his thinking. But there were things she wanted to know.

"My father," she said, "when did the troubles of our dear France begin? I hear every day so many things spoken of that I do not understand. How came these English here? And why do our great lords fight each other, and not against the king's enemies?"

The priest smiled and drew her to lean against his knee. "Strange questions for a little maid!" he said. "But you were ever more thoughtful than your years." He paused, considering. "Well, I will try to answer," he resumed, "though 'tis a long, sad tale.

"Almost a hundred years ago the English came, because their king laid claim to French lands and the French throne. Since then, there has been war; and if a few years of peace arrived, still war returned. For long, French noblemen fought side by side to drive away the enemy. But when the last king, the poor mad king, Charles VI, came as a boy to the throne, quarrels began between his uncles, especially the dukes of Orléans[1] and of Burgundy. Each wanted the most power. All through his reign this strife went on. It still goes on, dividing all France; so the two sides fight against each other instead of fighting the enemy, although the Orléans party, which we call the Armagnacs, is friendly to the Dauphin.

"Meantime, the English possess all the north of France, and our Dauphin must stay south of the River Loire,[2] where his people still are loyal."

"And is the Duke of Burgundy an enemy of King Charles?"

"He is a friend of the English; that is the same thing."

[1] ôr-lā-äṅ'.

[2] lwȧr.

"Then why does not the other duke fight for the King?"

The priest smiled, looking at Jacques d'Arc, who had begun to listen. "Straight reasoning, for a maid," he said. "The Duke of Orléans has for eight years been shut up in an English prison, a captive taken in battle. But, my little one, you must not speak of Charles as 'king.'"

"Why not?"

"Until he is anointed with the holy oil of Saint Remy and crowned in the cathedral of Rheims, he is not king in the sight of God."

"Jeannette," broke in her father, "you talk too much. These things are not for girls. Go back to your mother, and leave all such affairs to men."

The child, downcast, returned to her knitting. But she still listened.

"Did you hear," asked Father Frontey, "what the stranger said of the prophecy that is in all men's mouths?"

"Nay, I take small heed of gossip," said Jacques.

"But this is scarce gossip. Everywhere they talk of an ancient prophecy, perhaps from the books of the wise Merlin, which says that after France has been destroyed by a woman it shall be saved by a maid from the borders of Lorraine. Great glory to our valley, should it be so!"

"One half is already fulfilled. The wicked queen mother has ruined France." Even Jeannette knew how Queen Isabel had married her daughter Katherine to the English conqueror, Henry V. "But that a country maid should save it is impossible."

"My friend, with God nothing is impossible," said the priest gravely.

A knock came at the door. A ragged wayfarer, footsore and hungry, asked for shelter. He had walked far, having fled penniless from one of the villages which La Hire had laid waste. What had become of wife and children he did not know.

Jacques d'Arc, ever hospitable, asked him in. The family knelt while the priest said a prayer for this wanderer and for all souls in distress. He blessed the household, and disappeared into the night.

There was no spare bed, but a homeless stranger could not be turned away shelterless. It was not the first time they had received such a visitor.

"He may have my bed," said Jeannette, as she had often said before. "I love to sleep by the fire."

An hour later, when all the house was still, a wide-eyed child lay on the pile of rushes on the hearth and gazed, sleepless, into the dying fire. Poor France! Poor Dauphin! hateful, hateful English! Yet how could that be, when God made them, too? "A maid from the borders of Lorraine." If it could be——?

Though Jeannette was not asleep, her dreams were strange and bright.

Chapter III

AT HOME AND AT CHURCH

IT was not many days after Jeannette's talk with Father Frontey when Jacques d'Arc said, as he started out in the morning twilight for his work in the fields:

"Do not go to the meadow today, my daughter. It is dangerous for maids to be outside the village when so many rough soldiers and starving peasants are wandering the roads."

"But who will care for the animals?" asked the little girl anxiously.

"I have asked our neighbor Jean Biget[1] to send his boy Gaspard to take my turn as shepherd. He is too dull for schooling, but wise enough to tend the beasts." Then, as he saw Jeannette's downcast face, he added kindly, "Little maids should be with their mothers, to learn to spin and weave and sew. In a few years you will be a woman, my daughter, with a house of your own to keep." He was right, for in those days girls often married at fifteen or so.

When the sun was up, Jeannette led Nanette the cow and Esmeralda the goat to the village common and said a reluctant good-by to them both. Stopping for a moment on her way back to kneel in the little church, she returned to the morning tasks of the house and garden, and to the needle and distaff with which already she was not unskilled.

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[1] bē-zhā′.

So began a peaceful time for the little girl. In the summer mornings she would work in the garden weeding, digging, planting; in the afternoons, while her mother rested on the bench beside the door, Jeannette and Catharine would sit in the sunshine on the grass, sewing or spinning. Later, when she was grown to womanhood, Jeannette boasted that no woman in the village could sew or spin better than she. She liked the house better than the fields, especially as her friends Hauviette and Mengette came every day, bringing their work with them, to spend the afternoon at the D'Arc cottage.

When fall came, they helped her gather cabbages and turnips in the fields near the house, or rake the dry leaves fallen from the fruit trees, burning them in sweet, pungent bonfires; or cut fagots or hunt for acorns in the woods. In winter they slid merrily upon the snow, or sat around the fire telling old legends and roasting the chestnuts that they had gathered in crisp October days. In early spring they planted vegetables and flowers in the garden beds, and, as April and May passed, watched the green shoots springing up to life. And always, in the intervals of these more active tasks, as they sat with thread flying through busy fingers, Dame Isabelle would tell them old tales handed down to her from mother and grandmother.

The three other girls liked best the fairy legends, for fairies had once been many in the neighborhood of Domremy. But Jeannette was better pleased with the stories of the saints. Her favorites were Saint Margaret and Saint Catharine.

Saint Margaret, her mother said, was in very old times the daughter of a heathen priest at Antioch, a place far away across the sea in Syria. Brought up by a Christian nurse, she was secretly baptized. At fifteen she was very beautiful. One day, when she was tending her nurse's sheep, the governor of that country saw her and fell in love with her. But when he learned that she was a Christian, he put her in prison.

Next day he called her before him and said, "Unfortunate girl, have pity on your own beauty. For if you do not worship our gods, I will have you torn in pieces."

Margaret replied, "Christ died for me, and I am willing to die for him."

The governor then had her bound and beaten almost to death. Then she was taken back to the prison. No sooner was she alone than the devil appeared in the form of a huge dragon, ready to devour her. But she made the sign of the cross, and it went away. Then the devil took the form of a man, who spoke to her gently, caressed her, and begged her to obey the governor and save her life. But she seized him by the hair, flung him to the earth, and put her right foot on his head.

The next day, when she again refused to sacrifice to the heathen gods, the governor commanded that she be burned. But the fire did not harm her. In order that the people should not be converted by this miracle, the governor ordered her head to be cut off, whereupon her soul flew away to heaven in the form of a dove.

In the little church of Saint Remy there was a life-size painting of Saint Margaret with her foot on the head of a dragon. Jeannette often knelt there and thought of this brave girl of twelve centuries ago, only a few years older than herself but so loyal to her faith. She wondered if she could ever be so brave, so loyal. She prayed that she might.

Saint Catharine she did not know quite so well, for her altar was in the church across the river at Maxey. As beautiful as Saint Margaret, she was a princess instead of a shepherdess, her father being king in Alexandria, then a heathen city in Egypt. When the nobles of the realm sought her hand in marriage, she refused them, saying:

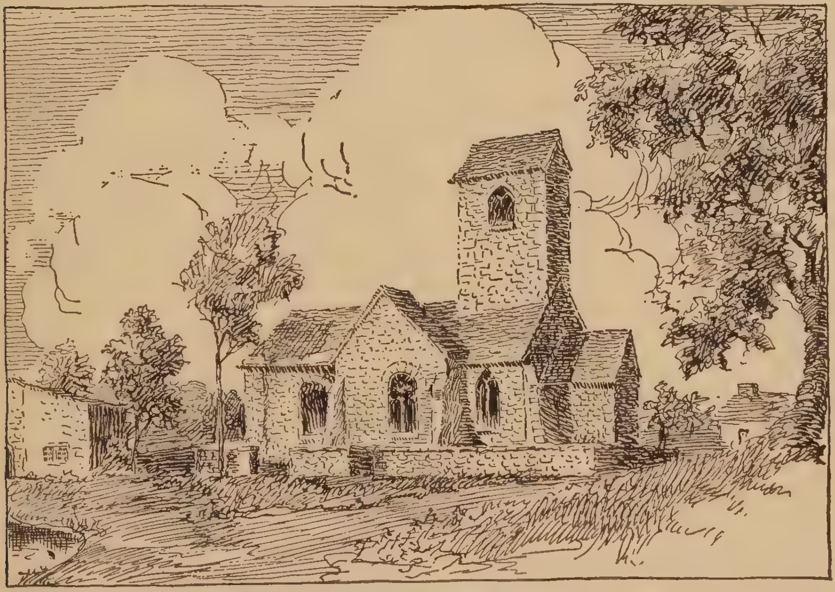
"Find me a husband who is at once wise, handsome, noble, and rich."

Then one night Catharine had a dream. The Virgin Mary appeared to her, holding the Child Jesus in her arms, and said:

"Catharine, will you take my Son for your husband?"

The princess was secretly baptized, and a few days after, as she was praying in her room, Jesus Christ appeared to her surrounded by saints and angels. He drew near her and put his ring on her finger.

Soon afterwards, the emperor of Rome commanded a great day of sacrifice to the heathen gods. Catharine went out into the public square, met the emperor at the gate of the temple, and reproved him for worshiping the work of men's hands instead of God, the creator of all things.



Church of San Remy at Domremy, showing also the rear portion of the "Birthplace" as they appeared in 1819

The emperor, filled with admiration, summoned the fifty wisest men of the empire to the palace to debate with Catharine, promising them rich rewards if they converted her to the heathen religion. But instead she defended her faith so wisely that they were all persuaded by her, and the emperor, in a rage, had them all put to death. Then he offered Catharine the next place in the palace to that of the empress, if she would give up her belief in Christianity. For many days she resisted this and all other temptations, until finally the emperor ordered her head to be cut off. At the moment of her death a voice from heaven was heard saying:

"Come, my beloved bride; the gate of heaven is open. I promise help from on high to all who call upon me through you."

This saint, whose name Jeannette's sister bore, was greatly admired by the little girls for her wisdom, though they felt a little afraid of her. They knew they could never hope to be so wise. On the whole, even Jeannette felt nearest to the Holy Virgin, in whose chapel she liked to hang garlands of flowers when she went to pray in the parish church.

Mengette and Hauviette thought their friend spent a great deal too much time in church. She was so good a companion, so full of fun, so untiring in games and play, that they often begged her not to leave them so often to go to say her prayers. Sometimes they even teased her for being too religious.

But Jeannette did not mind their teasing. She was happy on her knees alone in the dim shadows of the little stone church. She was happy when on Sundays the peasants assembled there to hear the sermon of the priest, the women squatting on their heels, the men standing along the wall. She was happy when she had a few coppers to put in the alms-box for the poor, or to buy a candle to burn before the altar of some saint. But she was happiest on Saturdays, when she went with her sister or with a group of village children to the top of the hill above the village of Greux,[1] adjoining Domremy, to the chapel of Our Lady of Bermont.

Passing meadows, vineyards, and orchards, they climbed a wooded slope from which they could see to the east the green river valley and the blue hills. On the top they found Saint Thibault's[2] spring, gushing from under beech and ash and oak trees, through a cleft of rock full of shadow and murmuring sound. The water of this spring cured fever and healed wounds. Above the fountain stood the chapel, surrounded in summer with the perfume of woods and meadows, in winter with gloom and silence. Here, dressed in her royal robe, with her starry crown on her head, holding her holy Child in her arms, Our Lady of Bermont received the prayers and offerings of flowers of the little boys and girls.

Sometimes, when the group of children came home to their noonday meal, Jeannette's father would be waiting for her to come and guide the plow for him, that work on a certain field might be finished before Sunday. Or she would go to the hayfield, to help load the carts that carried hay as payment to the Lady of Bourlemont. Or a neighbor's child would be ill, or an old father or mother, and Jeannette would go to help with the nursing. Sick folk were always glad to see her come, for her hands were deft, and she was full of sturdy health and cheerful spirits.

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[1] grüz.

[2] tē′bō.

Not all was peace. News came from time to time of strife and misery, now very near, now far away. Always the village trembled lest its turn come next. In the autumn after La Hire's raids began, Jacques d'Arc, in return for large sums of money to be paid that winter by the villagers, secured the protection of Robert de Saarbruck,[1] lord of Commercy.[2] But he, too, burned and pillaged the neighboring towns.

Meanwhile, under this shadow of fear, the days in Domremy passed peacefully. The days and weeks and months passed peacefully until almost two years had gone, and Jeannette was almost grown up.

[1] rō-bār′ dē sär′brŏŏk.

[2] kō-mār-sē′.

CHAPTER IV

THE FAIRY TREE

THE faint green of early spring came to tint the valley of the Meuse, in the year 1425, after a winter of anxiety and fear. In spite of the hardly earned money that the folk of Domremy had paid to the lord of Commercy for his protection, he had in 1424 gone over to the Burgundian side, and took no further care for the safety of the neighboring peasants. La Hire no longer even pretended to fight on the side of Charles, but was waging his own private war against the Dauphin's brother-in-law for some lands in Lorraine to which both nobles laid claim. All this meant much fighting back and forth throughout the whole region surrounding Domremy, so that the village lived in constant terror.

In August, 1424, Charles VII met with a terrible defeat by the English at the battle of Verneuil.[1] Shattered and discouraged, the young king withdrew his army, and allowed the English to seize, bit by bit, all that he had inherited from his ancestors. At the same time the powerful lords in his court came to have such control over him that his spirit seemed completely broken, and he gave up weakly to their power, letting them do whatever they liked with his kingdom. Nothing now remained of that kingdom in the lands north of the Loire.

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[1] vār-nŭ'ē.

But what most frightened the people of Domremy was the strife between a Burgundian lord, Jean de Vergy,[1] and the governor of Vaucouleurs,[2] the nearest large city, only a few miles away. The governor's name was Robert, Lord of Baudricourt,[3] and he was a loyal servant of France and of the Dauphin, and a fine soldier.

The soldiers on both sides in this little war laid hands on everything in the region that they could carry off—bread, wine, money, dishes, clothing, animals, large and small. What they could not steal they set fire to. They seized men, women, and children and held them for ransom. In many villages work was given up entirely. The peasants hid their horses during the day and led them out to pasture by night.

At Domremy every villager, even to the priest himself, took his turn at keeping watch in the church tower. Sometimes along the dusty ribbon of road the watchman would catch the gleam of weapons, or at night he would see the light of a burning village against the sky. If the soldiers drew very near, he would ring the church bells with all his might, and the people would leap from their beds half-dressed, hurry to the stables, and drive their beasts pell-mell to the castle on the island in the river.

[1] vār′zhē. [2] vō-kōō-lör′. [3] bō-drē-kour′.

After such a winter of terror, it was good to see the meadows turning faintly, damply green, and to watch the trees budding. And in the spring, no matter what dangers surrounded them, the children must keep their spring festival. This was a custom handed down from very old times. Every year, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, called "the Sunday of the Fountains," peasants from each village of the countryside went in a glad company to some spring near their home and there danced and sang in a country merrymaking.

At Domremy the place of this festival was a beautiful, wide-spreading beech tree that grew at the edge of the wood. It was known as the Fairy Tree, because long ago the fairies used to gather and dance there. Near it was a spring, cold and clear as crystal, reflecting the currant and gooseberry bushes that grew around it. Its water was known to have wonderful healing power.

On the Sunday of the Fountains in the year 1425, the children of Domremy were up early. They must go to mass, and then they must weave their garlands of early spring flowers and vines to carry with them to the Fairy Tree. Even before breakfast Jeannette and Catharine d'Arc were helping their mother to bake the little twisted rolls that made a part of the festival.

It was a glad little company, forgetful of the fears of war time, that set out that afternoon along the mile of road that led to the great beech tree. Four D'Arc children were there, and Mengette and Hauviette and pale little Simon Musnier,[1] whom Jeannette had just helped to nurse through an illness and who clung to her hand, and Annette de Saint-Amance,[2] and Michel Lebuin,[3] and many other boys and girls. They sang and chattered as they trudged along carrying their garlands and their baskets of rolls.

"It must have been splendid," said Mengette, "in the old days when the lord and lady of Bourlemont came to lead the people to the tree. They must have looked so fine, all in silk and velvet."

"Why do they not come any more?" inquired Hauviette, always ready with a question.

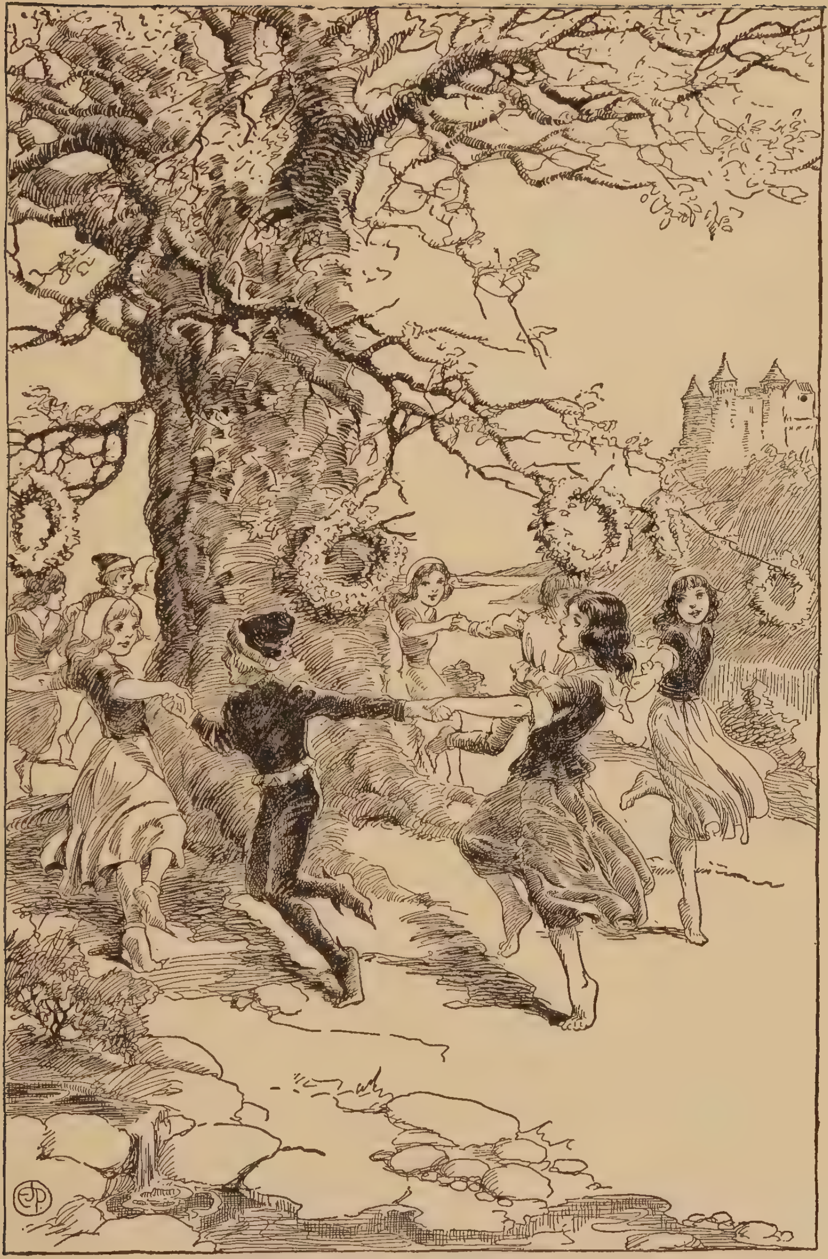
"That lord and lady died years ago," answered Catharine, the oldest and best informed on such matters. "They had no children, and their niece, who inherited their lands, is married and lives far away. There is no lord at Bourlemont now."

"We have to pay our taxes just the same," growled Jean d'Arc, who was old enough to take a manly interest in business matters.

"Do not think of sad things today," said Jeannette. "See, we are coming to the tree. How beautiful it looks! Its branches almost touch the ground."

"Let us see who can reach it first," cried Michel.

[1] sē′mŏn mü-nē-ā′. [2] sâṅt-ă-mäṅs. [3] mē-shĕl′ lẽ-bwăṅ′.



The children danced around the Fairy Tree

"Yes—but do not touch the branches; they are enchanted," warned Mengette.

The children broke and ran, arriving laughing and breathless at their goal. They hung their flowery garlands on the branches, and then, just as the fairies used to do, they danced in a circle around the old beech. When at last they were tired, they wandered in twos and threes to the spring, spread a cloth on the ground, and sat down to eat their picnic meal of hard-boiled eggs and nuts and the little rolls that their mothers had baked. Cupping their hands, they drank the cool, fresh water.

"Were there really fairies here, long ago?" asked Hauviette as they sat in the late afternoon sunshine.

"Of course," said Mengette. "Everyone knows that. The very first lord of Bourlemont, my grandmother says, fell in love with a fairy and used to meet her here in the moonlight."

"But why do they not come any more?" asked little Simon.

"They were the enemies of God, poor things, and had to be sent away," explained Jeannette. "My godfather Morel[1] has told me so. That is why on Ascension Day Eve the priest carries the cross from the church over the fields and beside all the springs and fountains, chanting the gospels as he goes. That was how the fairies were driven away, and it keeps them from coming back."

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[1] mō-rĕl′.

"But," objected Catharine, "your godmother d'Aubrit,[1] the mayor's wife, says that she has seen the fairies here with her own eyes."

"And what becomes of our garlands?" asked Mengette. "They are never on the tree when we come back."

"I cannot tell," said Jeannette. "But I know that if we believe in the good God, it is wrong to believe in fairy charms." She rose from her seat on the grass. "The sun is setting. Come, Hauviette, help me to fold the cloth and pack the baskets."

The little company strolled back along the highroad, laughing and singing in the sunset that lighted them on their way to Domremy. But Jeannette, an unusual thing for her, was very quiet. "I have never seen any fairies," she was thinking. "Perhaps godmother saw them in her dreams. For I, too, see beautiful things in dreams."

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[1] dō-brē′.

CHAPTER V

THE ATTACK ON THE VILLAGE

BY the summer of 1425, the peasants of Domremy had come to feel almost secure, with the island fortress as a near-by refuge. The boys played at battles and sieges over its stout old walls; the girls gathered flowers in the neglected garden, or amused themselves by pretending that they were the ladies of the castle. Time after time the villagers had made their escape thither at the sound of the clanging church bell. But at last the misfortune they had dreaded came upon them.

It was a warm, sunshiny July day. The men were in the hayfields, the women washing clothes at the brook. The boys had not come home from the school in Maxey. Suddenly the heavy stillness of the sultry afternoon was broken by the voice of the bell from the tower, and immediately Father Frontey, who was on guard, came hurrying down the winding stair.

"There is no time, my children," he cried to the frightened girls and women, who were beginning to hurry toward the common where the flocks were. "Even now the soldiers are in the village."

It was true. The heavy tread of mailed feet, the rattle of weapons, gave proof. From the outlying fields the men came running, but too late. Sullenly they looked on while the robbers loosed the cows from the stables and drove the sheep from the common and the goats from the pasture. The huge Flemish horses were unharnessed from the haycarts and used as beasts of burden for the furniture and clothing that were stolen from the houses.

The women wept as they saw their precious stools and chests dragged from their places, and their Sunday cloaks used as wrappings for their shining pewter dishes. The frightened animals bellowed and bleated; the fowls, tied up in sacks, squawked distressfully. The men, unarmed, dared make no defense of their property, and thus, wiser than other villagers, avoided bloodshed and burning. Finally the soldiers, their greed satisfied with as many beasts as they could drive and as much plunder as they could carry, marched off down the road to their leader's castle, some fifty miles away.

This leader was Henry of Orly, a robber noble, and his castle was called Doulevant.[1] It was not large enough to hold all the cattle and horses, sheep and goats, pigs and chickens from prosperous little Domremy; so part of the plunder was sent to Orly's other castle, which had a large courtyard.

But the men of Domremy, who until now had protected themselves so well, were not of a temper to endure the loss of all their goods without a protest.

[1] dōōl-väṅ′.

They sent word to the Lady of Bourlemont. She would not endure having the peasants of a village on her domain treated thus; such an attack was a direct wrong offered to her. She called in turn upon her kinsman the Count of Vaudemont,[1] summoning him to avenge her and right the wrong done to her peasants. Vaudemont chose a clever young soldier to lead a band of eight men to Orly's castle to recover the stolen animals. He found them all, unguarded in the castle courtyard, and promptly drove them out and started them upon the road home. On the way he was attacked by Orly's men, but beat them off and took the beasts all safe home to Domremy.

This was unhoped-for good fortune! Their Lady of Bourlemont was like no other overlord in all that region, thus to protect her people. The women still mourned over the empty places where once their copper kettles had hung or their wooden stools had stood; but they joined their husbands in thanksgiving that the animals by which they made their living had been brought back.

"We should have starved if it had not been for our Lady of Bourlemont," said Jacques d'Arc to his children. "We shall pay our taxes now more cheerfully."

"Suppose you had been killed," shuddered Dame Isabelle.

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[1] vôd-môṅ.

"They were of no mind for killing," answered her husband.

"But next time, perhaps? What then? Cousin Vouthon's[1] son-in-law was killed, you know, at Sermaize,[2] when La Hire was there two years ago. And before that, Vittel,[3] husband of Jeannette's godmother, was taken prisoner right here at Maxey."

"What is to be, will be," said Jacques d'Arc. "The saints so far have protected us. But I see no end to these troubles while the realm of France is divided. And France will be divided, so says Father Frontey, until the English are driven out and the Dauphin crowned."

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[1] vōō-tô′.

[2] sêr-māz′.

[3] vē-tĕl′.

CHAPTER VI

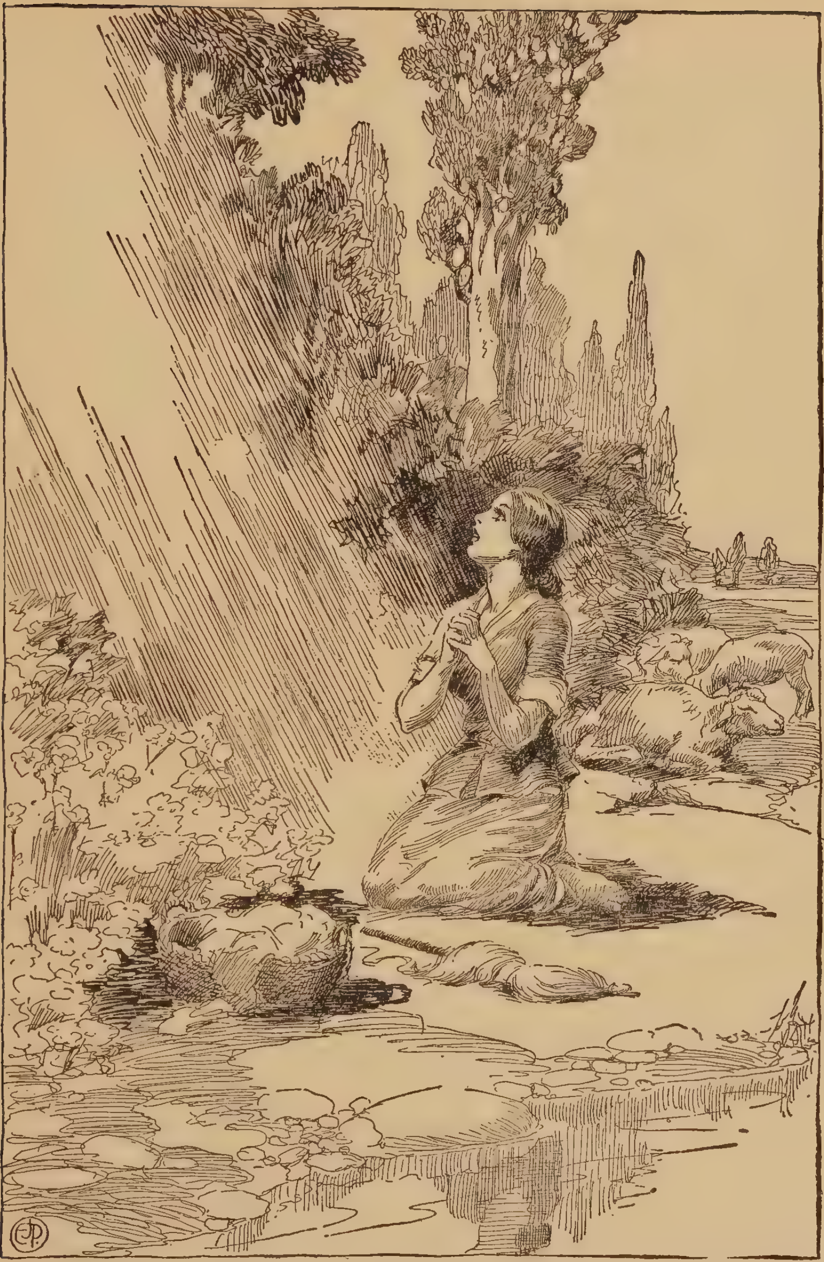
VOICES FROM HEAVEN

ONE morning, not long after the raid that had so terrified the folk of Domremy, Jeannette was gathering herbs in the garden. It was the leisure hour before the men came home to their noonday meal. Suddenly, at the side of the garden nearest the church, she saw a bright light shining, and heard a voice saying:

"I am come from God to help you to live well. Jeannette, be good, and God will aid you."

Very much frightened, the little girl fell on her knees as she watched the brightness grow less and disappear. The voice must have been a message from heaven, she thought, for she had been fasting and praying that morning. She was very quiet when she presently went in to dinner, for such an experience was hardly a thing to talk about to her family. Her brothers would laugh at her; perhaps her father would reprove her for being bold enough to think a heavenly voice would speak to her.

Next day she herself began to wonder if the light and the voice had been real, or if she had imagined them. But the experience was repeated shortly after, and when it came for the third time, she not only saw



Jeannette fell on her knees as she watched the brightness grow less and disappear the light but found that it came from a cloud of angels surrounding a splendid figure in shining armor. At once she recognized Saint Michael the archangel, chief of the armies of heaven, whose knightly figure she had seen in a painting in the church, where he was shown overcoming the dragon. He said to her, as she knelt there with hands clasped in a rapture of adoration:

"Jeannette, Saint Catharine and Saint Margaret will come to you by the command of God. Do what they tell you, for they are sent to guide you in what you will have to do."

The angels disappeared, and the vision faded into the light of common day. Jeannette, trembling with joy and fear, wondering what it all meant, went back to her household tasks. Still she said nothing, even to her mother; these things were too holy to speak of. Not till years afterward did she tell anyone what she saw and heard in her visions. Yet history knows nothing of these visions except through her own words in those after years; and this story is told as she told it then.

The young girl was glad that the two saints announced by the archangel were her favorites; she would not feel strange with them when they appeared. They were not long in coming. One day when she was alone at the shrine of Bermont, they came to her, fair and gracious, dressed like queens. "Their heads were crowned richly and preciously with fair crowns," Jeannette said years after, "and their voices were beautiful, gentle, and sweet." Kneeling with bowed head before them, she embraced their knees and kissed the hems of their gowns, from which a heavenly perfume floated. With her hands in theirs she made the pledge they asked, to keep her maidenhood as long as God wished her to. "Daughter of God," they called her, thrilling the soul of the peasant's daughter with the honor of such a name.

Then they went away.

Jeannette pressed her lips reverently to the earth where they had stood, and set out homeward. Turning on her fingers the two cheap little rings that her parents and her brother Jacques had given her, one bearing three crosses and the words *Jesus—Maria*, she felt these ornaments would now be sacred, for they had been touched by the saints.

After this, both the archangel and the saints came frequently to guide and teach Jeannette, at first two or three times a week, then every day or many times a day, until it seemed to her as if her heavenly friends were more real and near to her than her earthly ones. In her father's garden they came to her, or at the spring, but most often in the wood. She heard their voices in the rustling of the leaves; she heard them in the music of the church bells which she loved. And still she told no one, though her friends complained that she would not share in their games as gayly as she used to do, and would not dance at all in their circle on the village green.

She would slip away from play and song and dancing to listen to her "Voices," as later she always called the saints. She was still glad to help the poor and sick, still always friendly and good-tempered, still helpful and diligent at home. Mengette teased her for being as pious as a saint; Hauviette sympathized with her and admired her for her goodness; and Michel and Simon spoke to each other of how lovely was her look of serious sweetness.

Months passed, and the Voices began to say strange things.

"Daughter of God," they told her, "you must leave your village and go into France."

By "France" they meant the part of the country that still belonged to the Dauphin. It was far away to the west from Domremy. How could she go there, who had never been more than ten miles from home? She did not understand.

Then one day the archangel talked to her of "the sorrow that was in the kingdom of France," a sorrow that she had already grieved for. "Jeannette," said Saint Michael, "you must go to save the king."

Jeannette was astonished and frightened. "But I am only a poor girl," she said. "I do not know how to ride a horse or to make war."

But in spite of this answer the Voices kept repeating the same command.

Jeannette grew sad and troubled. She spent long hours kneeling on the stone floor of the church; she went to mass every day. When her father believed that she was watching the flock, she was often at the shrine of Bermont. Father Frontey had nothing but praise for her; but Jacques d'Arc complained sometimes that her piety kept her from doing her share of the work of the household. The small boys of the village made fun of her for going so much to church, and even the older folk thought her a little mad.

These things hurt the sensitive girl, and hurt her more as the months grew into years. Her sister Catharine was married, with all the rural merry-making that belonged to such events. Jeannette, now fifteen years old, should be thinking of a husband, not trying to be a saint, said the village women.

Since her neighbors talked in this way, and since even her parents seemed to feel that she acted strangely, it was more and more impossible for her to tell anyone about her visions. She kept them a precious secret, locked in her own heart.

In these days she was really happy only when she talked with her Voices. When they went away each day, she wept and begged them to take her with them. Yet she was more and more troubled by their commands, for she could see no way by which she might obey them.

"Take the banner of the King of Heaven," they said; "take it boldly, and God will aid you."

How could she go into France? How could she go among the soldiers? Her Voices did not tell her. They filled her with trouble and sorrow.

Then one day in early spring, in the year when she was sixteen, a clearer message came.

"Daughter of God," said Saint Michael, "you shall conduct the Dauphin to Rheims, that he may there be anointed."

At last Jeannette understood. From her mother's fireside tales, from the priest's sermons in the church sacred to Saint Remy, she knew of the holy oil with which every king of France must be anointed and without which he was not really king. God had chosen her, she thought, a peasant girl, to save the Dauphin by making him really king, so that he could fight powerfully, aided by heaven, against his enemies.

From that time on, Jeannette knew what great things she had to do. She did not yet know how they were to be done; but the first step was soon explained to her.

"Daughter of God," said the archangel, "go to the captain Robert of Baudricourt, in the city of Vaucouleurs, that he may give you soldiers to take you to the Dauphin."

Now Baudricourt was a name well known to Jeannette just at this time. During the last year a lawsuit had been brought against the village of

Domremy, and Baudricourt, the governor of Vaucouleurs, had taken part in the affair on their side. In connection with this lawsuit, Jeannette's father, one of the chief men of the village, had been chosen in March as representative to go and talk with Baudricourt. When he came home, he was full of talk about the nobleman and all his words and actions. He never tired of telling his family and the neighbors how he had seen and talked with this great man, and how well he had treated his humble visitor. Surely, then, it would not be hard for the peasant representative's daughter to approach the governor. But how could she reach Vaucouleurs?

Puzzled but resolved, Jeannette began to think of ways and means. More than ever she must pray; more than ever she must listen to her Voices.

"If it were not God's bidding," she said to herself, "I would rather be torn by wild horses than leave Domremy. But since it is his bidding, I must go into France."

Chapter VII

A VISIT TO VAUCOULEURS

THE first hard thing that Jeannette had to do was to find some way to reach Vaucouleurs without letting her parents know. Truthful and obedient as she had always been, it almost broke her heart to deceive them; yet she knew that God's command came first. She felt sure that her mother would not help her to follow that command; she was grieving for Catharine's recent death, and clung to her younger daughter. Her father would strongly oppose her, as something that happened about this time proved plainly.

Jacques d'Arc came to breakfast one morning greatly disturbed by a dream he had had. In it he had seen his daughter going away with some soldiers. Only a very low, wicked sort of woman followed the army about so of course the good man was shocked.

"If I believed that such a thing could happen," he said to his sons, pounding with his fist on the table in his fear and anger, "I would rather see you drown her; and, if you refused to do it, I would drown her myself."

So it would be of no use to try to gain her father's permission. The only person she could think of as likely to be helpful was her cousin, Durand Lassois,[1] her mother's nephew by marriage. He was so much older than Jeannette that she called him uncle. He lived in a tiny village called Burey,[2] three miles from Vaucouleurs. Jeannette had frequently gone there for short visits, and her family thought it nothing unusual for her to go for a visit now. Perhaps they thought it was good that she showed an interest in something besides prayers and fasting.

It was the month of May, lovely in the valley of the Meuse. Jeannette trudged on foot to Burey, five miles down the valley. The family there were glad of her coming; but when she began to tell Uncle Lassois why she had come, the good man was puzzled indeed.

"Take me to Vaucouleurs to see the governor," she begged over and over.

"But your father and mother—what will they say?" he answered again and again. "Such a thing was never heard of."

"It is the command of God," she told him; and although she said nothing to him about her Voices, he at last believed that God must have spoken to her. What helped most to persuade him was her repeating of the prophecy that she had known about so long, that a maid from the borders of Lorraine should save France.[3] The simple, upright man did not see why this should not come true. In short,

[1] dü-räṅ lă-swä′. Also spelled *Laxart*. [2] bü-rā′. [3] See page 15.

the earnestness of his young cousin finally won him over, and at the end of a week she had his consent to take her to Vaucouleurs.

However, though Lassois was only an ignorant peasant, he did not build as much hope as did Jeannette on Robert de Baudricourt. He knew that this nobleman was like all the other soldiers of his time, rough, greedy, and selfish, and that he would seek what was good for himself rather than the good of his country.

Baudricourt's castle was built on the rocks at the top of a steep hill. It was with a rapidly beating heart that Jeannette entered the gate of the little walled city and climbed the narrow street. Beside her, all out of breath, puffed the stout Lassois in his woolen cap and jerkin.[1] They passed through the castle gate, wide open for everyone to go in and out, and found themselves in the great stone-paved hall where Sire[2] Robert sat at an oaken table surrounded by his soldiers. The latter looked in surprise and pleasure at this comely peasant girl with her straight, sturdy figure in its shabby red wool dress; they began to laugh and jest with each other, while Baudricourt's glance at the intruder was stern.

Jeannette paid no attention either to laughter or to sternness. She went straight to the governor and stood before him.

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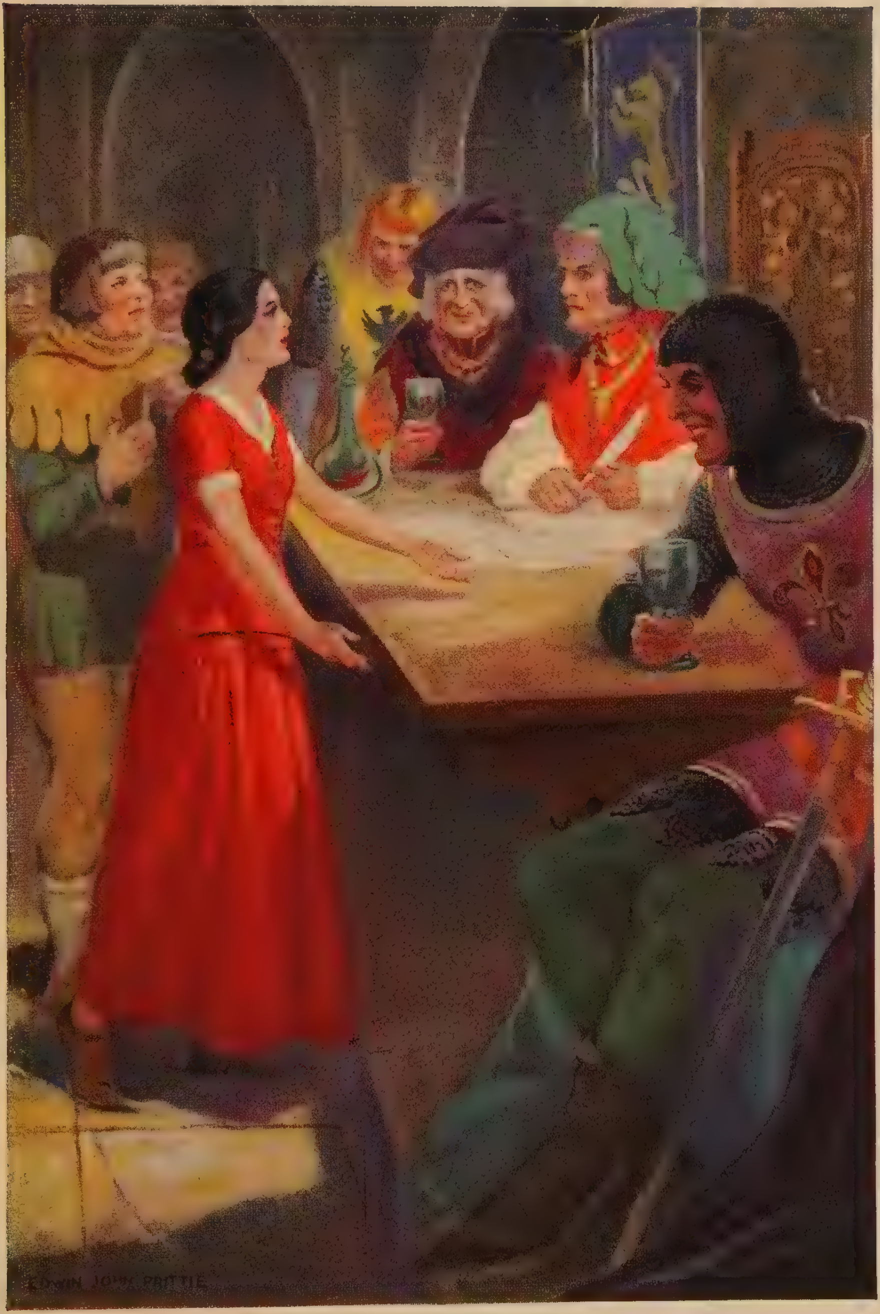
[1] A close-fitting jacket.

[2] A French title equivalent to *Lord:* pron. sēr.


EDWIN JOHN PRITTIE

Jeanne stood before Sire Robert and his soldiers

"I am come to you," she said earnestly, "in behalf of my Lord, to tell you to send word to the Dauphin to guard himself well and not engage in battle with his enemies. Before the middle of next Lent, my Lord will send him aid."

Robert de Baudricourt stared, not knowing whether he could believe his ears. Was the girl mad? or was she trying to imitate the warning given seventy-five years before by a farmer of Champagne[1] to King John before he was beaten in the battle of Poitiers?[2] Baudricourt smiled grimly as he thought how little the spiritless Dauphin needed such a warning. The soldiers watched their master, to learn from his face and words whether they were to laugh at the girl or listen to her. Before he could speak, she went on:

"The kingdom does not belong to the Dauphin. But my Lord wishes the Dauphin to be made king and to hold the kingdom in trust.[3] In spite of his enemies, the Dauphin will be king; and it is I who will conduct him to his crowning. I come to ask you for soldiers to take me to the Dauphin."

Baudricourt was not a man of great understanding. Those strange words, "my Lord," repeated over and over, must refer, he thought to some great nobleman.

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[1] A central province of France.

[2] pwä-tyā'.

[3] She meant that God would be the real king of France, but Charles would govern for him.

"Who is your Lord?" he asked bluntly.

"The King of heaven," answered the young girl simply.

That settled matters in Baudricourt's mind. The girl was mad. No good girl in her sane mind would come thus boldly into the midst of a room full of rough soldiers, nor ask to go on a journey with an escort of them. Either she was mad, or else her morals sadly needed correcting.

"Take her away," he said roughly to Lassois. "Whip her well, and send her home to her father."

Jeannette turned sadly away, her hopes sinking. As she left the hall, she heard the loud laughter of the soldiers at their master's wit. Outside the gates, Lassois turned and shook his fist angrily at the carved portal.

"I knew it would be so," he cried.

"Do not distress yourself, my uncle," said Jeannette gently. "We must be patient for a little longer."

CHAPTER VIII

OBSTACLES IN THE PATH

THOUGH Jeannette was not discouraged, she agreed with her uncle Lassois that it was best to do nothing more for the present. Next day she walked the five miles back to Domremy, and took up again her usual quiet way of life.

Nothing, however, seemed to her very real or important now except her Voices; she went about her daily tasks like a girl in a dream. Her mind was full of pictures of the Dauphin and his knights riding out to battle surrounded by hosts of guardian angels.

It was hard, too, not to talk of the things of which her heart was full. She began to let slip her secret. About a month after her return from Burey, she was walking one June evening along the road by the river and met her childhood friend, Michel Lebuin, a young man now, returning from his work.

Michel looked admiringly at the shapely figure, the heavy chestnut hair wound round the well-poised head, the earnest gray eyes.

"Good-evening, Jeannette," he said. "Not at your prayers on Saint John's Eve?"

"I have prayed already," she answered. "To walk at sunset through the fields I love brings heaven near."

"I think you almost live in heaven already," said the young man.

"Oh, no, no! But I have much to think of. Michel, there lives a maid between Coussey[1] and Vaucouleurs who, before a year passes, will have the Dauphin anointed king at Rheims."

Michel stared. What the village folk said of Jeannette was true, then. Too much religion had turned her brain. It was a pity, for she was just the girl to make a good wife. However, he spoke to her cheerfully.

"That is fine news, if true. The good God grant it. Well, a pleasant walk to you!"

"Good-night, Michel. Your supper must be waiting."

No, she thought, as she passed on, she must not look for understanding among these her own people.

Nevertheless, a few days after, when she met Gerardin d'Epinal,[2] the only man in Domremy who did not side with the Dauphin, she hinted at her secret again.

"Comrade," she said, "if you were not a Burgundian, I would tell you something."

D'Epinal laughed and shook his finger at her. So the pious daughter of Jacques d'Arc was at last going to be married! He wondered which of her childhood playmates was the lucky man.

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[1] A town south of Domremy: ko͞o-sā′.

[2] zhā-rȧr-dăṅ′ dā-pē-nȧl′.

Jacques d'Arc would have been only too glad if such had been the case. Always careful of the conduct of his children, he could not think what was the matter with Jeannette. He did not know that every day in his own little garden heaven came down to earth; but he did see that his daughter appeared to be out of her mind, and that the things she said were mad. She talked of knights riding out to battle; she talked of saving the kingdom. Lassois had let fall hints of the visit to Baudricourt. The good Jacques remembered his dream of two years before and grew more and more anxious; all this could come to no good end.

His wife shared his fears. It was a cruel thought for these upright folk that their daughter could become one of those worthless women who wandered about after the armies. Weeping, Dame Isabelle besought her child to be as years ago she used to be. The father stormed and scolded.

"That you should deceive us so, you, the pious one!" he cried. "A visit to Burey, indeed, when all you wished was to fling yourself at the head of the governor! What must he think of us, he who talked with me last March as to the chief man of my village —I, who cannot govern my own household!"

"No, no, my husband!" pleaded Dame Isabelle, as Jeannette sat silent with bowed head. "She is not wicked, our daughter. She is only mistaken. Little one, tell us that you will give over this wild talk."

"Wild talk, indeed! The gossips at village doorways point at her with their finger and say, 'There goes the girl who will save France.' And the old wives are saying that the fairies at the Tree have cast a spell upon her and she is bewitched."

An end was put to such trying scenes, however, by an event that was tragic for Domremy. Four hundred Burgundian soldiers, sent by the English to conquer Vaucouleurs and all the country around, swept down the valley amid fire and blood, bringing ruin to the villages in their path. Having warning of the danger in advance, and seeing in imagination their cattle stolen, their homes ransacked and burned, their wives and daughters maltreated, the villagers hurriedly gathered their beasts and their household goods together and left their cottages and fields. A sad little procession of refugees, they traveled south, past wheat fields and vineyards, to the market town of Neufchâteau,[1] where they found such lodgings as they could.

The D'Arc family found shelter with an innkeeper nicknamed "La Rousse,"[2] a woman of none too good character. The inn was full of soldiers, merchants, and pilgrims, and the hostess was glad of Jeannette's help in the extra work caused by the coming of the

[1] nö-shȧ-tō′.

[2] lȧ-rōōs′.

villagers. During the two weeks that they stayed there, Jeannette cooked and washed and scrubbed, and in the intervals between these tasks looked after her father's cattle, taking them out to pasture. Such leisure as she had she spent at church.

A few days of this time were occupied by an unhappy experience that showed Jeannette once again how little help she could look for from her parents. One day an official came to her with a notice that she must appear before the court of the Bishop at Toul,[1] a city twenty-five miles to the north. A young man of Domremy claimed that Jeannette had been betrothed to him and now refused to keep her pledge. Appealing to her father for help, the girl was surprised by his refusal.

"It is best that you marry," he growled. "That will cure you of your nonsense."

"Agree with the young man, my daughter," pleaded Dame Isabelle. "He is a good young man. He will be a worthy husband."

Jeannette's anger blazed. "Did my father ask him to do this thing?" she cried.

"Not ask, exactly," replied Jacques, surprised that his scheme had been so quickly guessed. "He came to me to ask for you; he said he had your promise and begged me to make you keep it. It seemed best to believe him; I thought in this way the marriage could be brought about. I will not stand in the way of his suit to the Bishop. You will be better married, you with your wild dreams," he ended in a surly tone.

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[1] tōōl.

"Then, since you have done this unkind thing to me, I must go to Toul," said Jeannette sadly, her quick anger dying. "Will you not go with me, my father, and take my part?"

"Rather I would take the bridegroom's part," stubbornly insisted Jacques d'Arc. "Better a dead daughter than a disobedient one."

"In all else I have obeyed you," Jeannette answered, "but in this I cannot. And if you think me better dead, perhaps the wolves or the robbers on the way to Toul will make sure of that."

Wearily she trudged the miles to Toul, through country filled with soldiers and bandits. At night she found shelter in hospitable villages on the way, as wanderers had often found shelter in her home. Her Voices told her she would be safe through the perils of the journey. Perhaps, too, they helped her to know what to say before the Bishop, so that she won her case and was released from the pretended promise. Then wearily she trudged the miles back again, and was ready to join her family upon their return to Domremy.

It was a changed village that they found. Houses, orchards, and fields had been robbed and burned by the soldiers. The church was a mass of blackened ruins. The returning villagers wept aloud. Their lives were safe, and their loved ones, their animals and their household goods—but the village they loved was dead. They wept; and then, with the undefeated spirit of the French peasant, they set to work to bring their beloved homes to life again.

CHAPTER IX

JEANNE BEGINS HER MISSION

IN October, while the busy folk of Domremy were still repairing their cottages, retrimming their trees and vines, and rebuilding their church, news came from the west, brought by a wandering friar, that almost made them forget their own troubles.

The English were about to lay hands on the part of France that still was loyal to the Dauphin! During the last three months their army, under the Earl of Salisbury, had swept across the country between Paris and the Loire, and had captured all the towns on the north side of the river except the strong city of Orléans. On October 12 they had begun the siege of that last remaining stronghold of the king.

If Orléans fell, France would fall. In control of the river that until now had barred their way, the English would soon be masters of the provinces to the south. The people of Orléans had realized this, and though their Duke was a prisoner in England, they had prepared for a long and stubborn resistance to the besiegers, under the leadership of the gallant Dunois,[1] half brother of the absent Duke.

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[1] dü-nwȧ′.

Such was the news that stirred all loyal hearts in Domremy. It was now the end of October. How long could the city hold out? Could the Dauphin succeed in sending the citizens aid from outside? Could he assemble his army and raise the siege? Here, Jeannette thought, was part of the task of saving France to which her Voices called her. As autumn turned into winter, and news kept drifting in about the brave city holding its own against such fearful odds, she resolved to go again to Vaucouleurs. Though that city now belonged to the English, and Baudricourt held it only as agent of the English regent, the Duke of Bedford, uncle of the baby king, yet Sire Robert himself was loyal to France. Perhaps the news of Orléans would make him more willing to listen to her.

This time she arranged that Uncle Lassois should ask her father to allow her to come to Burey and nurse his wife, who was ill. Perhaps she was surprised when her father agreed to let her go. It was strange that he did so, for he must have known she would repeat her appeal to the governor. He may have felt it unneighborly to refuse his daughter's aid to a kinsman; he may have thought Baudricourt would again reprove and shame her, more sharply than before, and thus end her mania; he may have been persuaded by Father Frontey or some visiting priest that Jeannette's visions came from God and that she should not be interfered with. Whatever the reason for Jacques d'Arc's permission, at the middle of January, 1429, Durand Lassois came to Domremy to take his young cousin home to Burey.

Did she guess, as she walked for the last time down the familiar street, that she would never see it again? She had said good-by to her parents as if going only for a short stay; she knew what grief they would feel when they learned her intention not to return till she had saved France. Yet she did not hesitate. "If I had had a hundred fathers and mothers," she said later, "I would have gone."

To everyone she saw as she passed down the street she said good-by—especially to Mengette, to whom she called, "Adieu, Mengette! I leave you in God's care." But she avoided seeing Hauviette. She feared the weakness of tears if she tried to say farewell to this dearest friend of all. Hauviette learned of her departure only after she was gone. She seems to have understood that Jeannette would not return, for she wept bitterly.

After a few days at Burey, Lassois took his charge to the city and found lodgings for her with a friend of his, Henri le Royer.[1] Catharine, the wife of this good man, was delighted with her visitor, who sat with her to sew and spin and went to church with her, except when she was at the castle pleading with the governor. Day after day she sought out Baudricourt, beseeching him to listen to her message.

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[1] ôṅ-rē′ lĕ roy′ā.

Gradually he ceased to be as rude to her as he had been at first, even though he put little faith in her words, repeated over and over:

"I must go to the Dauphin. You must send me to the Dauphin. It is the will of my Lord, the King of Heaven, that I reach the gentle Dauphin."

In a few days all the town knew the maid from Domremy, who was going to raise the siege of Orléans and save France. They admired her goodness and wondered at the long hours she spent at prayer in the church, whose priest, Jean Fournier,[1] knew her well. Crowds followed her in the street as she passed to and fro. A few women here and there began to call her "saint." The name spread; it was a happy thing for a town to own a saint, and Vaucouleurs was proud. But the townsfolk did not call her by her village name of Jeannette; she was Jeanne now, Jeanne the Maid. Hereafter it was as Jeanne d'Arc[2] that she was to be known forever, though England and America are more accustomed to the English form of that name, "Joan of Arc." the name that gives this book its title.

Soon, though Baudricourt held out stubbornly against her, she found two friends who possessed influence in the castle. One of them had seen her months before, when she came for the first time to Vaucouleurs, and had been impressed with her sincerity. He was a young gentleman of Lorraine, a squire in rank, about thirty-six years old, named Bertrand de Poulengy.[1] His official duties had frequently taken him for the past dozen years to Domremy; he knew the D'Arc family to be honest farmer folk, and their daughter to be well spoken of for her piety. He was himself a man truly religious, and therefore more inclined to believe Jeannette than were the rougher soldiers.

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[1] fo͞or-nē-ā′.

[2] zhȧṉ dȧrk.

Poulengy had a good friend in Vaucouleurs, the knight Jean de Nouillompont,[2] usually called Jean de Metz. He was about twenty-eight years old. The two gentlemen talked together of the strange peasant maid whom all the town was watching. Both of them were inclined to think her words worth taking a chance on. What harm could it do to send her to the Dauphin?

So one day as Jeanne passed along the street, Jean de Metz stepped up to her. "My friend," he said, "what are you doing here? Is the King to be driven from his realm and are we all to be English?"

"I came here," she answered, "to ask Sire Robert to take me or send me to the Dauphin. But he cares nothing for me or my words. However," she added, "I must reach the Dauphin before the middle of Lent, even though I must wear my legs down to the knees!"

"Have you not heard the latest news, that all

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[1] pōō′lŏṅ-zhē.

[2] nōō-ē-yŏṁ-pŏṅ′.

France is rejoicing for—the betrothal of the King's son?"[1]

"Nevertheless I must go to the Dauphin, for no one else in all the world, neither king nor duke nor the daughter of the king of Scotland, can regain the kingdom of France." Then she added more gently, "There is no help but in me, though for my part I would rather spin with my poor mother. But I will go, because my Lord wishes me to."

Jean de Metz asked, as Sire Robert had done before, "Who is your Lord?"

"He is God," she answered simply.

At once the young knight burst out eagerly, "I promise you and pledge you my faith that, God helping me, I will take you to the Dauphin." Then, clasping her hand in token of his pledge, he asked, "When do you wish to start?"

"Now," she replied, "rather than tomorrow; tomorrow rather than later."

But De Metz by this time was thinking of the difficulties of traveling the roads of France with a peasant girl in a red dress. He suggested a possible disguise in boy's clothes. She seized upon the idea at once. "I will gladly wear a man's dress," she agreed.

Meantime Sire Robert was wondering whether Jeanne was not bewitched by an evil spirit. The devil, he knew, was clever enough to appear in an innocent form. He referred the matter to the priest, Father Fournier. Accordingly, one day when Catharine de Royer and Jeanne were spinning together, Baudricourt entered with the priest. They asked the hostess to withdraw, and Father Fournier spoke to Jeanne in Latin, saying:

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[1] Charles VII's son Louis, five years old, had been betrothed to Margaret of Scotland, aged three, for the sake of a Scottish alliance.

"If you are evil, depart; if you are good, draw near."

This was the form of words used for driving away an evil spirit. If Jeanne were possessed by a demon, she would upon hearing them fall down in a fit, or would try to escape from the presence of the holy father. But no such thing happened. On her knees she dragged herself toward the priest, and did not flee from the holy name of God. So Father Fournier assured the governor that there was no devil in her.

After the two men had gone away, Jeanne was very angry at their suspicions.

"It was wrong of Messire Fournier," she said to Catharine. "He might have known me, for he has often heard my confessions."

But the interview helped Jeanne's affairs along, as perhaps the priest had hoped it would. Since she was not from the devil, she must be from God, so reasoned Sire Robert, simple soldier that he was. Perhaps urged on by De Metz and Poulengy, he wrote to the Dauphin in regard to Jeanne, asking if

Charles would receive her at his Castle in Chinon,[1] where he was then in residence. When Jeanne knew about this, she began to count the days until the answer should come.

About this time came a courier from Orléans bringing bad news. The flower of the knighthood of France had been badly beaten by the English in a battle at Rouvray.[2] Vaucouleurs mourned at the tidings. "This is what Jeanne d'Arc said would happen if Sire Robert did not send her to help the king," the townsfolk said. Soon people were saying that on the very day of the battle Jeanne had said it was taking place. This story came to the governor's ears, and helped to convince him of the maid's miraculous power.

At last there came from Chinon a royal messenger, Colet de Vienne.[3] Perhaps the King sent word by him to send the Maid thither; certainly he did not forbid it. De Metz and Poulengy still used their best arguments to persuade the governor, but he still wavered in his decision. Meantime, Jeanne's fame had spread so far that it reached the ears of Duke Charles of Lorraine in his castle at Nancy, thirty miles to the east. This nobleman was old and sick. When he learned of the Maid at Vaucouleurs, he supposed she was one of the miracle-workers or magicians such as frequently appeared in those superstitious days. He thought she might cure him

[1] shē-nŏṅ′. [2] ro͞o-vrā′. [3] kō-lā′ dẽ vē-ĕn′.

by some miracle or magic charm. So he sent for her to come to Nancy.

Jeanne did not know why he sent for her, but it was necessary for her to obey the Duke. Moreover, perhaps he would help her to reach the Dauphin. With this hope, and with the Duke's safe-conduct, she dressed herself as a peasant boy, mounted a pony which Uncle Lassois bought for her, and set out on the journey. It was her first experience, probably, of horseback riding, an art which she evidently learned quickly. Jean de Metz escorted her as far as Toul; the devoted Lassois went all the way.

Jeanne was surprised when the Duke asked her for a miracle. "I know nothing of such things," she said. But she gave him some good advice about improving his health by correcting his manner of life, for, like everyone in the region, she knew that he was a wicked man.

She did not fail to ask for the help that she hoped for in this very unpromising quarter. "Give me your son-in-law," she said, "and some soldiers to go with me to the Dauphin. Then I will pray God to restore your health." The Duke's son-in-law, René of Anjou,[1] Duke of Bar, was the brother of the Queen of France, and a fine young man, chivalrous, gracious and brave, and a painter and poet as well as a soldier.

But the Duke was on the side of the Burgundians.

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[1] rĕ-nā′ of äṅ′zhōō.

He did not want the Dauphin saved, so he gave Jeanne neither son-in-law nor soldiers. However, he seems to have been rather pleased with the girl's frank courage in speaking her mind to him, and gave her for herself a black horse and four francs, about fifty dollars in present-day money.

Back at Vaucouleurs, she found that Sire Robert had finally decided to take the risk of sending her to the Dauphin. Nothing, he thought, could be lost by it; something might be gained.

Joyfully Jeanne made her final preparations. Chief of these was to send a letter of farewell to her father and mother, asking their forgiveness for having left without their permission. This letter was not preserved, so there is no way of knowing exactly what she said in it; but afterwards they told of having received it and of having forgiven her as she asked. The good man and his wife had by this time begun to understand that their daughter was an unusual girl, and that the work she was undertaking was a noble work, done for God and France. If all Vaucouleurs thought she was a saint, her parents must not hinder her mission.

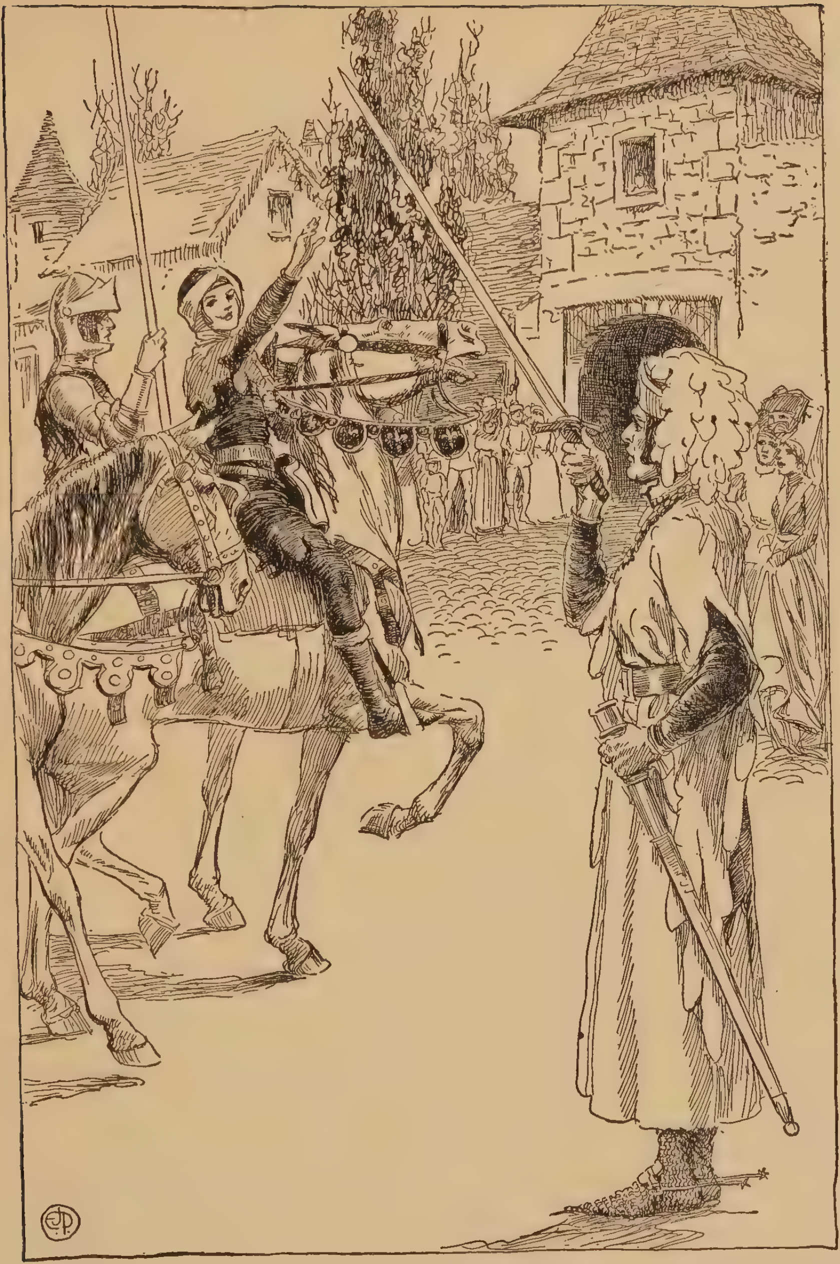
The people of that town, meanwhile, in their enthusiasm for their "saint," had collected money to buy her an entire outfit for war. She had a close-fitting coat of cloth, belted at the waist, a doublet and hose, a hooded cape, leggings, high boots, and spurs. Sire Robert gave her a sword.

Dressed in this simple but smart attire, with her straight black hair cut round like a boy's under a loose woolen cap, she was the picture, as she sat her horse, of a well-built young page ready to start out on his adventures in the great world. The world into which she was going was cruel enough—a world full of robbers and cutthroats, of brutal soldiers who attacked women and burned churches. Half the width of France lay between Vaucouleurs and Chinon—a France hostile to the Dauphin. Her friends were afraid.

"How can you dare to make such a journey," one of them asked her, "with soldiers on every side?"

She replied smiling, "I am not afraid of the soldiers. The way will be made plain before me. If enemies come against me, I have God on my side, who is able to open the way for me to go to the Dauphin. For that I was born."

So, in one late February twilight, the Maid set out with her little escort of six. They must travel by night to avoid danger. Jean de Metz, her knight, and Bertrand de Poulengy, her squire, rode on either side of her. Behind them came their two servants. Protecting the rear rode Colet de Vienne and his companion Richard the Archer, both of whom had to return to Chinon. Colet carried letters to the King from Baudricourt. Jeanne rode, not the fine steed of the Duke of Lorraine, but the horse which her Uncle Lassois had sacrificed himself to give her.



Baudricourt, his sword raised in salute, cried to Jeanne in farewell

Before the gate through which the little troop would pass, apart from the crowd which pressed about to see their "saint" depart, stood stalwart, rough Robert de Baudricourt. One by one he made the six soldiers swear to guard safely the Maid whom he intrusted to them. Then, his sword raised in salute, he cried to Jeanne in farewell:

"Go! and let come what may!"

There were tears in Durand Lassois' honest eyes as he watched the riders disappear through the old gateway, the Porte de France, that led to the westward, into the winter fog that hung low and cold over the valley of the Meuse. Behind were Domremy, the distaff and the sheepfold; before were Chinon, Orléans, the battle, and the King.

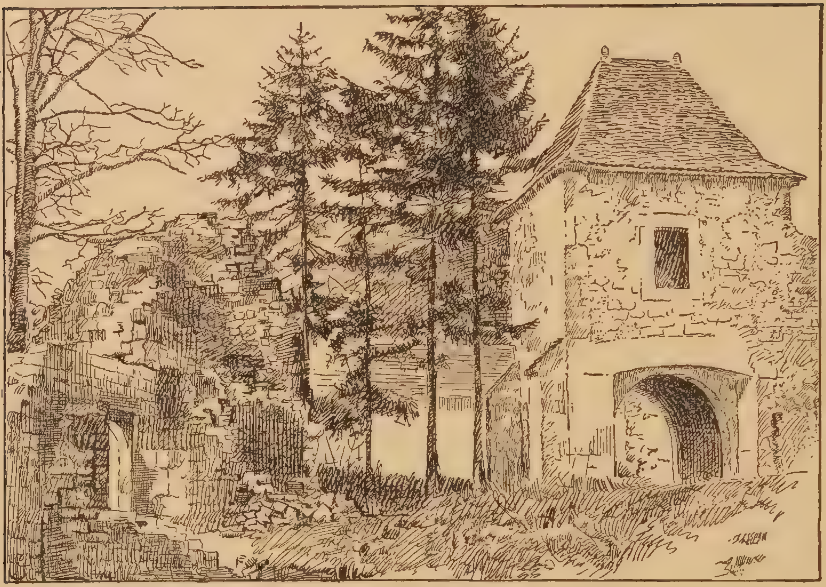
CHAPTER X

THE JOURNEY TO CHINON

AS the last grayness of the misty twilight turned to the black of night, Jeanne's little army turned off the road and struck into the forest. Roads were not safe for loyal Frenchmen, in country held by Burgundian soldiers. The two gentlemen, however, knew the byroads in the woods near Vaucouleurs; they knew, too, the best places to cross the deep, rushing streams, through which their horses must swim. They dared not approach the bridges, as these were all guarded by the enemy.

Under cover of the woods, they stopped to wrap the horses' feet in cloth, so that their hoofs would make no noise upon the ground. Across wide stretches of desolate meadow they rode at a gallop, not to be overtaken by hostile prowlers. At the rivers the two knights put Jeanne between them, each with a hand on her horse's bridle rein. They rode always in silence, so as not to be overheard by lurking foes.

After thirty miles of such riding, they came in the morning to the abbey of Saint-Urbain, on the east side of the river Marne, a place well known as a refuge for travelers, to whose needs a whole building was devoted. Here the tired riders rested and prayed



"Porte de France" through which Jeanne rode to Chinon

before setting out on the hundred fifty miles of dangerous journey that lay between this kindly abbey and the next friendly place.

On February 24 they crossed the abbey bridge over the Marne and pushed forward on their way. Six days it took them to reach Gien,[1] the first city loyal to the King; six days, always riding, stopping when exhausted to drop on the hard ground for a few hours of sleep. Jeanne, fully dressed, wrapped herself in a blanket and slept between her knightly protectors. Six rivers had to be crossed before they came to the sheltering Loire. Jean de Metz, telling long after of the terrible journey, said that they had

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[1] zhē-ŏṅ′.

"many afflictions," but left them undescribed. It is easy to guess them—cold, hunger, thirst, fear of enemies, attacks of wolves, weariness. They dared not enter any city for rest and refreshment; they would have been made captives immediately.

The Maid, as her friends now called her, kept up the spirits of her little troop during this hard time. Her faith, her goodness, her gentle gayety, her endurance of hardships, all inspired courage. No matter what peril arose, she was always ready with the hopeful words, "Fear nothing. You will see at Chinon how glad the gentle Dauphin will be at our coming."

"Will you really do what you say you will?" anxiously asked De Metz one day in a moment of discouragement.

"Do not fear," Jeanne answered. "What I do, I do by commandment. My friends in Paradise tell me what to do."

Jeanne's greatest trouble on the journey was that she could not enter a church to hear mass or to pray. Her companions knew that such a thing would not be safe. Once, however, it seems that she slipped away from them, entered the city of Auxerre,[1] and went to mass in the cathedral there. It was a hostile city, with walls and gates. The guards probably did not trouble to stop the entrance of a harmless-looking youth who asked for entrance. But probably her guardians reproached her, when she returned safely to them, for taking such a risk.

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[1] ō-zâr′.

Finally there came an end of skulking in forests and fording dark, icy rivers. They came to Gien, a friendly city on the northeast bank of the Loire. Here at last was a French town obedient to the King of France. There would still be bandits on the roads, perhaps; but at least the travelers could keep to the highways and stop for rest at comfortable inns. And they could tell their names and purpose.

It was not long before all Gien was talking of the Maid from Lorraine who would fulfil the prophecy of Merlin and save France. Travelers leaving the city that day spread the news abroad. Someone carried word of it to Orléans, now almost despairing, and from Orléans were sent messengers to Chinon to learn more of this deliverer and to urge her coming. Rumors reached the English camps, frightening the soldiers, who knew that Merlin had been a magician, and thought this girl must be a witch.

Before this, however, Jeanne and her escort were again on their way. Southwest they rode, through fair, well-cleared farming country, to the river Cher,[1] and followed its north bank to Selles[2] and then to Fierbois.[3] At this place there was a famous shrine to which many pilgrims came every year. It was sacred to the Saint Catharine who was one of Jeanne's Voices.

[1] shâr.

[2] sĕl.

[3] fy-âr-bwä′.

Hundreds of years before, Charles Martel, ancestor of the kings of France, had placed in this chapel the sword with which he had driven back the invading Saracens. Afterward the shrine had been neglected until about forty years before the time of Jeanne, when a man blind and paralyzed, praying in the ruined chapel, had been restored to health and sight. In gratitude he rebuilt the shrine, and since then it had been noted for the miracles of healing reported to have happened there. It was a favorite place of pilgrimage for prisoners escaped from the English, who felt they had gained their freedom through Saint Catharine's help. In her chapel they hung their shields and swords as offerings of gratitude.

Jeanne was delighted to go to the service in the chapel of her saint, and to know, as she was setting out to be a soldier, that her saint had a special care for soldiers. She was thrilled at the weapons and armor which hung on the walls about her as she prayed, and which made a deep impression on her mind.

From Fierbois Jeanne sent a letter to the King, probably written down for her as she dictated it by one of the priests there. She asked leave to come to Charles at Chinon, and explained that to bring him help she had crossed three hundred miles of country and forded many dangerous rivers. Whether or not this letter reached the King is uncertain; there came no answer to it, and his counselors may have kept it from him.

The letter having been sent ahead by messenger, the little company set out at noon on the last stage of their journey. It was March 6, the fourth Sunday in Lent. As Jeanne rode along the blue Vienne, with its banks turning green in the early spring sunshine of Touraine, she thought of the gray Meuse at far-off Domremy.

"It is the Sunday of the Fountains," she said to herself. "Will my friends think of me, as they dance at the Tree and eat their supper at the spring?"

But just as she was ready to be homesick, the towers of Chinon loomed against the sky. She had arrived!

CHAPTER XI

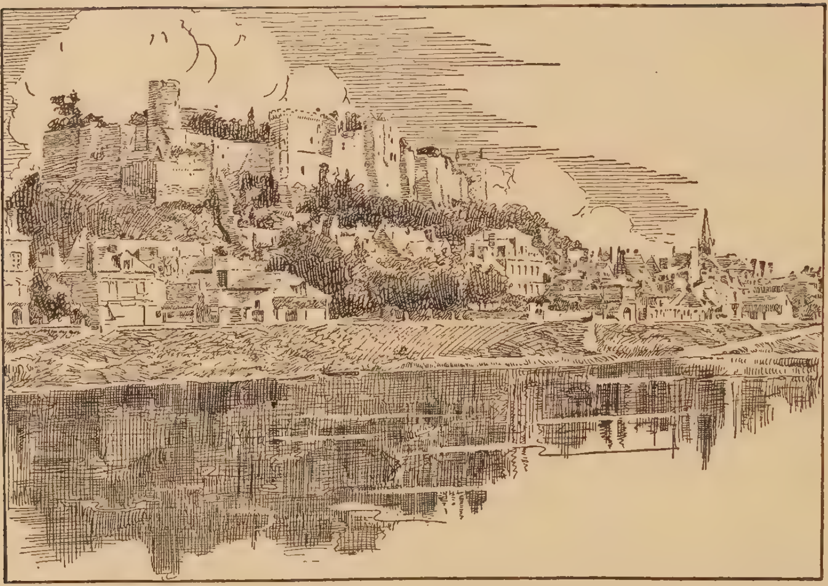
THE DAUPHIN AND HIS COURT

FROM the narrow, unglazed window of the little room at the inn in Chinon where lodging had been found for her, Jeanne watched Colet de Vienne pass along the street that led to the castle. He carried Baudricourt's letter to his master. He would tell the King that she had arrived, as her letter had promised.

"Surely the Dauphin will be glad," she thought. "As for me, there is nothing now for me to do but pray. My journey is ended."

Not far away she had noticed a church; so, descending the steep, dark stairs, she made her way out into the street. Towering above the roofs of the little town she could see, very near, the ancient walls of the castle. A gray mass of turrets, towers, parapets, and dungeons, it lay there against the pale misty blue of the March sky. Behind those gray, forbidding walls was her king. It was hard to wait for his command to come to him; however, she must be patient a little longer. She entered the shadows of the church.

Meanwhile, in the castle, there was great division of opinion about the Maid, as she called herself,



Chinon, already weatherbeaten by storm and battle when Jeanne came

and her message. Charles VII was not the sort of man to decide great questions for himself, even if his counselors would have allowed him to do so. And the decision what to do about this peasant girl who claimed that she could save France was not a matter to be left to a king so much less clever than his counselors.

Charles VII had not had much chance to learn to be clever or brave. He was twenty-six years old at this time, and had been king for seven years, since the death of his poor mad father, Charles VI, and his cruel, unscrupulous mother, Queen Isabel, who had sold France to England by marrying her daughter Catherine to the English king, Henry V.

It was the little son of this marriage, Henry VI, for whom the throne of France was claimed and whose armies kept Jeanne's Dauphin out of his rightful dominions.

Charles VII had grown from a wretched, sickly child into a homely, long-nosed, knock-kneed, pitiful young man, his spirit so broken by the shocking things he had seen in his youth that his counselors had complete control over him.

For the four years previous to the beginning of the siege of Orléans, the English, exhausted from their last campaigns, had been content to occupy the northern part of France, leaving Charles his territories south of the Loire River. So he had had four years of peace, living in retirement with his queen, Marie of Anjou,[1] a gentle, plain woman, and her mother, Yolande, exiled Queen of Sicily. He did not regret the pause in the war, for he had no taste for battles. He had many castles along the Loire, and he moved from one to another; but he was so poor that he could not hold a splendid court, like earlier French kings. All his courtiers were more finely dressed than he; instead of having new clothes, all he could afford to do was to wear the shabby old ones, carefully mended. Restless, sad, and fearful, he felt his affairs constantly going from bad to worse, and had no spirit or courage left with which to fight his enemies.

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[1] än′zhōō.

The person with most influence at court was Chief Counselor Georges de la Trémouille,[1] who pretended to be very devoted to the King, but was really a narrow-minded, evil-hearted, greedy rascal who was looking out only for his own interests. He was very rich, and had lent so much money to the King and to many of the great nobles that no one dared to oppose his will.

Another counselor whom the King trusted even more than he did La Trémouille was Regnault de Chartres,[2] Archbishop of Rheims and Chancelor of France. Although this very charming gentleman was a priest of high position in the church, he was more of a politician, and cared very little for the love and charity taught by his religion. He was not so rich as Trémouille, but was equally clever in making the King do what he wished.

Just at the time of Jeanne's coming, neither of these gentlemen wished the King to rouse himself to make war against the English, beyond the sending of a small body of soldiers who had already gone to help the defenders of Orléans. Trémouille could keep more power for himself if the King were weak and poor than if he were successful and rich. Regnault, while he really loved the King and wanted to help France, thought the way to do it was by making peace with the Duke of Burgundy rather than by trying to conquer the English.

[1] zhôrzh dĕ lä trā-mo͞o-ē′.

[2] rā-nyō′ dĕ shärtr.

It was not hard to see why both these counselors were disturbed at the arrival of Jeanne, and would have liked to prevent her from urging the King to an active part in the war. From three different directions her coming had been announced—from the letter of Robert de Baudricourt, brought by Colet de Vienne; from the letter Jeanne herself had sent from Fierbois; from two citizens of Orléans who had come to inquire about the Maid of whom they had heard rumors in the besieged city. Was it best for the King to receive her or not?

If, as she said, she were sent by God to save France, it would be wicked and dangerous to send her away. But if, on the other hand, she were a witch, and sent by the devil to harm France, it would be equally wicked and dangerous to receive her. She had convinced that rough soldier, De Baudricourt; but was it by the assistance of saints or demons? The gentlemen who had brought her to Chinon, to be sure, had nothing but good to say of her; but they, after all, were only soldiers and might be bewitched. It seemed best, before reaching any decision, to send a committee of priests to examine this girl. They would know whether she were a witch or not, and could tell if she were really sent from heaven.

So, at the humble inn of Madame Regnier,[1] Jeanne was visited that afternoon by a little group of dignified churchmen.

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[1] rā-nyā′.

"Why have you come?" they asked her.

"I will tell nothing except to the King," she answered at first; but when they explained to her that the King had sent them to ask the question for him, she replied, "The King of Heaven has given me two commands. One is to raise the siege of Orléans; the other, to conduct the Dauphin to Rheims to be anointed and crowned."

Even the priests could see nothing of the witch (and in those days people firmly believed in witches) about this earnest, straightforward peasant girl with the clear, gray eyes. They went back to the castle to tell the King that he might safely receive her. But Charles VII still wavered. By this time all the court was talking of the Maid. Some said it was dangerous for the King to admit to his presence an unknown woman who might have some wicked scheme on foot. Others, of more kindly spirit, reminded him of the risks this girl had taken to come to him, journeying in the midst of enemies, along impassable roads, across wide rivers, protected, it seemed certain, by the saints. At last, on Tuesday, when Jeanne had waited more than two days at her inn, the council and the King decided that she should be brought to the castle.

It was late in the afternoon when Jeanne, with her two good knights Jean and Bertrand on either side, rode up the steep, narrow lane leading to the castle gate. An escort of archers sent by the King went before, carrying torches to light the early darkness of the gray March day. Over the drawbridge, through the archway, across the stone-paved courtyard, up the great stairs; then—the King's audience room! And Jeanne had reached the place where she had so long prayed to be.

The scene must have dazzled her a little as she stood in the doorway. The great hall was crowded, for everyone in the castle was there, attracted by the news of the strange visitor who was expected. In the light of a blazing fire and of fifty flaring torches, shimmered the brightly colored velvets and satins of courtiers and court ladies. Three hundred glittering men at arms were posted about the walls. Elderly gentlemen in furred robes of state were elbowed by slim, glittering young courtiers in snugly fitting doublet and hose, who trod upon each other's fashionably pointed toes. Among this crowd, the shabbily dressed King was obscure, hardly noticed.

Jeanne stood only a moment looking on before the Count of Vendome stepped forward to lead her into the room. The buzz of conversation died; everyone looked curiously at the odd figure, straight and sturdy, in the black suit of a page, with gray cape thrown back, with little woolen cap in hand, leaving uncovered a crop of black hair cut short and round like a boy's. This short hair, in that time of elaborate hairdressing, was the strangest thing of all about Jeanne.

Hidden though the King was in the crowd of courtiers, Jeanne did not wait to be escorted to him. Unheeding curious glances and whispers, straight through the crowd she made her way, knowing by some intuition which was the man she sought. She said later that her Voices counseled her. Before him she fell on her knees, saying:

"God bless you, gentle Dauphin."

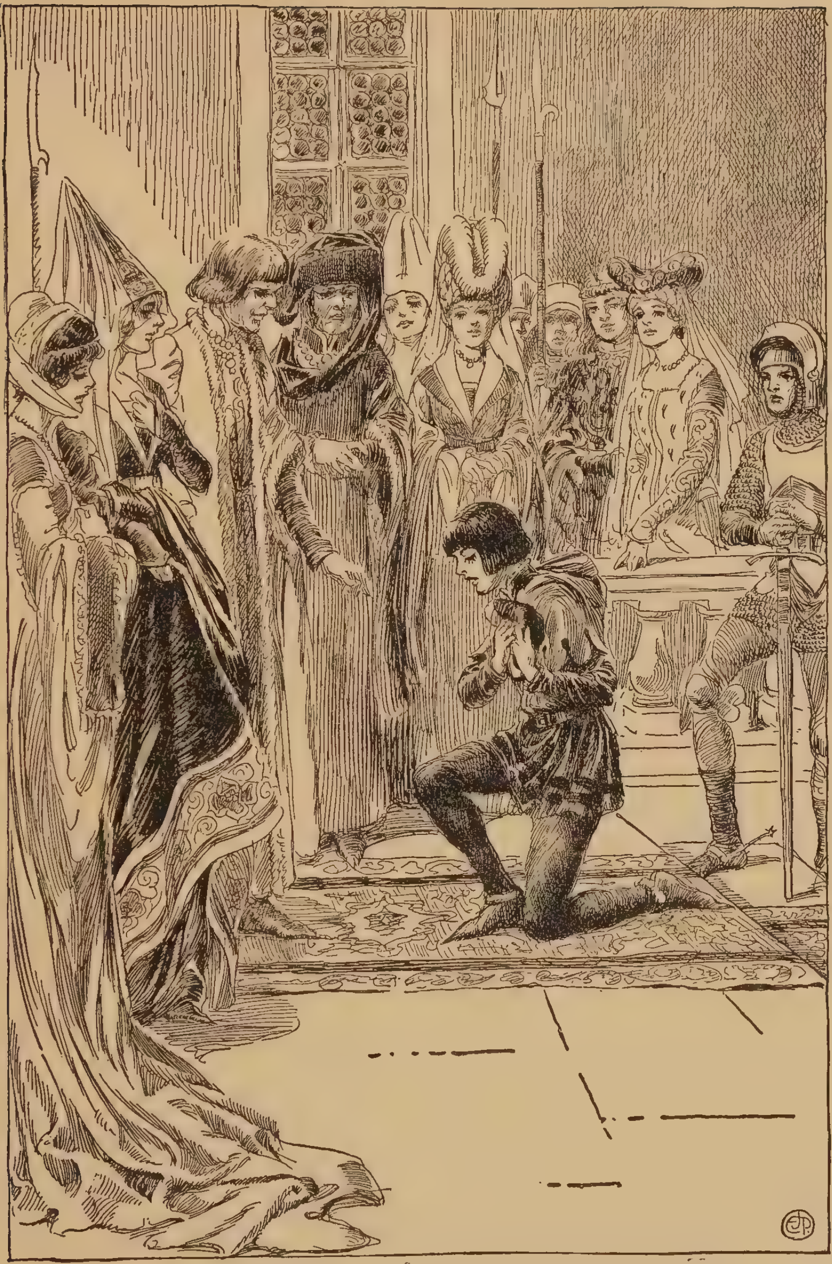
"What is your name, my girl?" he asked kindly. "And what is it that you wish?"

The moment had come. "Gentle Dauphin," she said earnestly, "my name is Jeanne the Maid. Through me the King of Heaven commands you to go to Rheims to be anointed and crowned. He commands also that you be true lieutenant of him, the King of Heaven, who is the King of France."

Impressed with her simple directness, the King drew her aside into a little alcove, and there talked with her for some time. No one could hear what they said, and no one ever knew exactly. But when the king returned to his friends his face was radiant; and it seemed as if from that moment he gained courage to do what needed to be done. Calling some of his counselors to him, he said to them:

"She tells me that she has been sent by God to help me recover my kingdom."

However, though the King was thus convinced by Jeanne's simple goodness that there was no harm in her, he and his council could not so readily believe



Jeanne fell on her knees before the Dauphin

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that she was able to do all she claimed. Before deciding to employ her, they would keep her for a few days where they might watch her.

The castle of Chinon was built in three parts—the central structure, where the royal court lived; toward the west the very ancient castle of Coudray,[1] with its eight strong towers; and toward the east the fortress where the soldiers were lodged. To Coudray Jeanne was now escorted, and given into the care of good Madame Bellier,[2] wife of the King's major-domo. Her room, in one of the round towers, seemed to the peasant girl very large and finely furnished. There was a fire on the stone hearth, tapestry on the stone walls, wolf or fox skins on the stone floor, and one narrow slit of a window. A page was assigned to wait upon her, a fifteen-year-old boy of noble birth named Louis de Conte.[3]

In her tower room Jeanne waited as patiently as she could for several days. De Conte told in wonder of the hours she spent in prayer. Sometimes he saw her weeping. Many people came to visit her—great noblemen from the court, filled with curiosity; soldiers, who wished to learn what she knew about the art of war; priests sent by the King to examine her more fully as to her habits and beliefs. She answered all their questions as well as she could, though often when they left she wept for very weariness. Not one of them could find any harm in her.

[1] ko͞o-drā′.

[2] bĕl-yā′.

[3] lo͞o-ē′ dẽ kŏṁt.

She was good, gentle, and religious. She was certainly not a witch.

But the King still wavered. However, since no one any longer suspected Jeanne of any evil design, Charles sent for her often and talked with her familiarly. He liked to talk with her. Because he was her king, she thought him all that was noble; and because she thought him so, the poor bewildered King began to feel his own nobility.

One day while the King and Jeanne were talking, the young Duke of Alençon[1] entered the hall where they were. He had been at his estate, twenty miles away, shooting quails, when one of his retinue came riding from the castle with the news of Jeanne's coming. The idea that she was going to save Orléans and drive away the English had pleased the Duke, for his lovely young wife was the daughter of the Duke of Orléans, now many years a prisoner in England. So he hurried to Chinon to hear all about it.

"Who is that?" asked Jeanne as soon as she saw him. Learning that he was the King's cousin, she welcomed him, saying, "The more the princes of the blood royal of France are together, the better it will be."

The next day, after attending the King's mass (he heard mass three times a day), Jeanne was taken to Charles's private room, with Alencon and Trémouille. In their presence she promised the Dauphin that if he would make a gift of his kingdom to God, God would do for him all that he had done for his ancestors. Later in the day they took her out to a meadow to show how well she could ride. Her eleven days' journey had made her familiar with a horse's back. Lance in hand, she rode with such ease and grace that the Duke of Alençon, amazed, made her a present of one of his horses.

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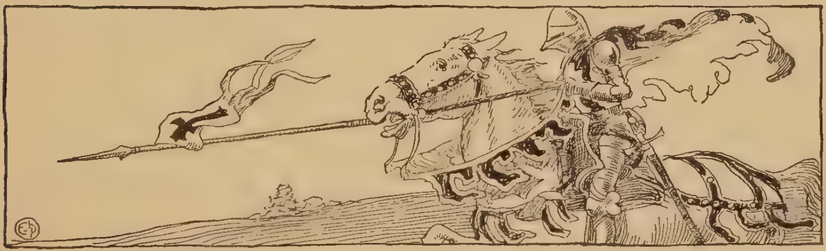
[1] ä-lôṅ-sōṅ′.

Jeanne liked the Duke. He was young; he believed in her when everyone else doubted her; he had been wronged by the English; and he had a warlike spirit. These were good reasons for liking him. So she was glad when he asked her to go for a few days to visit his wife and mother at his castle. After the hours of questioning by the gloomy priests, after the suspicious looks of the foxy Trémouille and the smooth, false politeness of the suave Regnault, after the effort to awaken courage in the sad, spiritless King, it was good to sit in a sunny garden with a pretty girl not much older than herself, even though the girl were a great lady and she herself only a peasant. She had never lived in such a lovely place; she had never been made much of by lovely ladies. For four pleasant days she was very happy, with the girlish enjoyment of beauty and luxury that was natural to her seventeen years.

Then she went back to her tower room. From her narrow slit of a window she gazed at the silver ribbon of the Loire. Far up the river, out of sight, was the besieged city she had come to save. She saw the fields, quickening with the first green of spring; the quivering poplar trees, just feathering into leaf. It was mid-March; time was passing, and there was so little time! Surely, surely, soon would come the King's command to arm, and mount, and ride to Orléans!



CHAPTER XII

DELAYS ON THE WAY TO ORLÉANS

AT last, one day late in March, it seemed that an end had come to Jeanne's waiting. She was summoned from her tower to take the road. The page's dress which she hurried to put on was of finer material now than it had been when she arrived at Chinon. Her manners, too, had lost some of the awkwardness that belonged to the peasant girl, for she learned quickly to behave like the people about her. She had not lost, however, the simple frankness that made her charming.

In the castle courtyard a fine company was waiting to ride with her. The King was there, with the queen his wife, Marie of Anjou, and the queen her mother, Yolande of Aragon and Sicily. After them rode La Trémouille and the Archbishop of Rheims, with other lords and ladies. Jeanne, her two knights, and her page joined the procession, and they all set out to the southward. For a little while she thought they were starting for Orléans, and was happy; but soon she saw by the sun that the besieged city lay in the other direction. She asked where they were going.

"To Poitiers," was the reply, and someone explained to her that the King thought it best for her to be examined by the learned scholars and priests who were assembled in that city.

Jeanne was bitterly disappointed. Poitiers was forty miles in the wrong direction, and she was tired of being asked the same questions over and over. "In God's name," she cried impatiently, "I shall have plenty of trouble in Poitiers. But my Lord will help me," she added more cheerfully.

The wise men awaiting her in Poitiers were those members of the faculty of the University of Paris who were loyal to France. Like all scholars in those days, these professors were priests, the most learned in all the land. When the English took Paris, they had fled south of the Loire. So, also, had the loyal members of the Parliament of Paris, and thus Poitiers had been for several years the real capital of France. Times were hard. The learned lawyers and churchmen were tired of cold and hunger and shabby clothes. They would have been glad enough to welcome anyone who would drive away the enemy, so that they could go home to Paris. They were therefore quite inclined to be favorable toward the Maid, for they could not help hoping that here was someone who could fight the English and conquer them.

A group of sixteen learned bishops and professors of theology, besides some clever lawyers, had been chosen to examine Jeanne. It would have been a terrifying ordeal for a person older and more experienced than a seventeen-year-old peasant girl. But

Jeanne was not afraid. She had been taken to stay in the house of a prominent lawyer, Jean Rabateau,[1] who occupied with his wife a large mansion not far from the palace and the cathedral. Here the black-robed examiners came to question the Maid.

They did not all come at once, but visited her in little groups. There were five the first day. Their first question was, "Why have you come?"

She answered simply and bravely, "As I kept the sheep, a Voice appeared to me and said, 'God has great pity for the people of France. Jeanne, you must go to France.' Hearing these words, I began to weep. Then the Voice said, 'Go to Vaucouleurs. You will find there a captain who will send you safely to the King. Do not be afraid.' I did what was told me, and I came to the King unhindered."

"But," objected another scholar, "if God wishes to save France, he does not need soldiers."

She made a brilliant answer. "In the name of God!" she cried. "The soldiers will fight, and God will give the victory."

Then they all began to talk at once, each one eager to get his word in, hardly waiting for her answers. For two hours the argument kept on, and at the end Jeanne was probably no more tired than they, for her common sense had been a match for their learning. They went away, expressing themselves as well pleased with her.

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[1] rȧ-bȧ-tō′.

Day after day, the visits from questioners went on. Sometimes Jeanne grew impatient with the solemn faces and long-drawn-out speeches of these learned scholars. She liked the soldiers better. She had not come so far from home to waste her time in this way. She was hurt because they kept asking her for a sign from heaven; she felt they ought to have believed her without that.

"Take me to Orléans," she cried one day, "and I will give you signs enough."

Once when, overcome with annoyance, she sat on her bench in sullen silence and refused to speak, a learned prior said persuasively, "But you know, Jeanne, we are sent from the King."

"I can well believe you are sent," she flung at him. "Why do you ask me such questions? I am a poor girl, and do not know A from B."

"Why, then, have you come?"

"I have come on behalf of the King of Heaven to raise the siege of Orléans and conduct the Dauphin to Rheims for his coronation and anointing."

They did not spend much time on the question whether it was right for a woman to wear a man's dress. Since she was doing it for a good purpose, they felt that she was only following the example of the saints. And when she explained that she could not call Charles king until he was anointed with the holy oil, they felt that that, too, was worthy of the approval of the church.

The scholars must have been surprised, sometimes, at the clever sharpness of the Maid's answers, and at her boldness in setting up her own ideas against theirs. "There are more things in God's books than in yours," she said one day when they had tried to talk her down because of her ignorance. Why did they not reprove her for disrespect? It must have been because they were loyal Frenchmen, honestly seeking help for their King; and because they liked simple frankness when they met with it.

Probably they laughed when one day she got the better of a priest who spoke with a southern accent which seemed to the Lorraine girl very bad French.

"What language did your Voices speak?" he inquired.

"A better one than yours," Jeanne answered quickly.

So it went on, day after day, until at last, early in April, the learned doctors agreed that they were satisfied with Jeanne. They wrote their report to the King, saying that she was a good girl, humble and honest, earnest in her religious faith, and able to reply simply and sensibly to all their hard questions. It was not impossible, they said, that she had, as she claimed, been sent by God; and considering the hopeless state of the country, it could do no harm for the King to try using her against his enemies.

So one more triumph was won!

Meantime, it had not taken the people of Poitiers many days to know and love Jeanne. Every day when she crossed the cathedral square as she went to pray men and women stood in crowds to watch her pass. Farmers flocked in from the country to see the farmer's daughter sent by God to save France. Whatever King and priests and counselors might think, the people believed in her. Noblemen and great ladies came to visit her in her lodgings. They came out of curiosity, usually, supposing her to be mad. They went away saying that she was a saint.

As soon as the King had heard the answer of his wise men, he began to arrange for a campaign to save Orléans. The Maid must be equipped for war, and the best place for that to be done was Tours,[1] a few miles north of Chinon, where lived a great many makers of armor.

Meanwhile, Queen Yolande had gone to Blois,[2] thirty-five miles east of Tours. Both cities were in the province of Touraine,[3] which Charles had given the queen five years before in return for a gift of money to make war with. The Duke of Alençon joined Queen Yolande at Blois, and together they set to work to gather and prepare an army to raise the siege of Orléans.

It is easy to imagine how the hardened old soldiers must have felt when they heard that the new army was to be commanded by a peasant girl. What would she know about marching or fighting? How could

[1] to͞or.

[2] blwä.

[3] to͞o-rān′.

she give orders? The King must have lost his wits. Of course, it was possible that she knew some kind of magic spell or enchantment that would help them to win in battle. At all events, it would be something new in a life that was dull enough. They would go and see. So captains and noblemen began to assemble in camp at Blois, bringing their men with them, until the army numbered about four thousand.

Jeanne, at Tours, was staying in the rich and elegant home of a former maid of honor to Queen Marie, Lady Eleanor de Paul, whose husband, Jean Du Puy,[1] was a counselor of Queen Yolande. When she arrived there, escorted by her page and by Sire Jean d'Aulon,[2] a brave and honest squire whom the King had appointed to take care of all her personal affairs, she was happy to find waiting for her the two faithful companions of her journey, De Metz and Poulengy. The little bodyguard of four soon had added to it another page, Raymond, and Jeanne's two brothers, Jean and Pierre d'Arc, who had come to join the army.

How much news they had to tell her of the last four months in far-off Domremy! No one there was laughing at Jeanne any more, or whispering about her.

"Each one," said Jean with a dry smile, "is trying to tell how much better she knew you than every other one."

"Except Hauviette," added Pierre.

[1] dü pwē′.

[2] dō-lôṅ′.

"Ah, but she knew me best!" cried Jeanne. "Does she not speak of me?"

"She only says she misses you, and grieves because you did not say good-by to her."

The brothers told Jeanne, too, how their mother had made a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of Puy, to pray for Jeanne's success. The young men had gone there with her, and then come north to Tours. They brought to see their sister an Augustinian monk of Tours whom they had met at Puy. His name was Brother Pasquerel.[1]

Young and very devout, he came to her in his gray robe with the rope girdle, heard her confession, said the mass, and pleased her very much. He became her confessor and almoner,[2] and accompanied her wherever she went.

It was a busy time in Tours for the smiths who made armor. Jeanne's bodyguard of seven, besides the Maid herself, had to be fitted out with new armor. And there was very little time to do it in. Orléans was waiting. Moreover, the master armorer who equipped Jeanne found his task unusual and thrilling. Not every day did one make so small a suit, shaped to a woman's figure, and for the saviour of France, besides. He put his best effort into it, and when it was done, it was beautiful.

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[1] păs-kẽ-rĕl′.

[2] The priest in charge of the private charities of a person in high position.

Jeanne's armor was of polished steel which shone white in the sunshine. She thought it like the armor of an archangel, and was delighted, though it took her some time to grow used to the discomfort of its weight. It cost an amount which today would equal a thousand dollars. Probably, too, she had a surcoat,[1] of silk woven with gold and silver, such as knights wore over their armor. The surcoat opened in front, and was slashed at the edges into long, pointed scallops that floated around the knight as he rode along. Jeanne said that she liked a fine cloak almost as well as a fine horse.

The fine horse she was invited to choose for herself from the King's stables. Now she was ready, all except her sword and her banner. For the march to Orléans, she needed a better sword than the unbelieving Baudricourt's gift. And she knew the sword that she wanted; she said afterwards that her Voices told her of it.

It was a sword with five crosses engraved on the hilt that she said was buried in the earth behind the altar in the chapel of Saint Catharine of Fierbois. When Jeanne had stopped to pray at the famous shrine, she had been thrilled by the weapons and armor hanging all about the walls, offerings of grateful soldiers. Perhaps she had heard the monks say that when new offerings came to the saint, the old ones had to be stored away in chests, or, if they had belonged to persons of especial note, to be buried in the chapel. She might have seen numerous swords with five small crosses, as it was not an uncommon engravers' device. At all events, she felt sure that the sword was there, though old and rusty, and that coming from that place it would seem like a gift from Saint Catharine.

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[1] A topcoat.

So she sent a letter to the monks at Fierbois, and they sent her back just such a sword as she described. It had been covered with rust, they said, from its burial in the earth, but the rust had dropped away as soon as they touched it. They ordered a sheath for it of crimson velvet embroidered with lilies, and the priests of Tours made it another, of cloth of gold. These would soon have worn out, so Jeanne provided a sensible leather sheath.

All sorts of stories at once began to be told about the sword, which folk said was sent to Jeanne by a miracle from heaven. It was the sword of Charles Martel,[1] some said; others that it was the weapon of Alexander the Great. When the English heard of it, they said to each other that it was an enchanted sword, like King Arthur's, and they were more than ever afraid of this Maid whom they believed a witch.

Jeanne did not know of all these stories. She only knew that she loved Saint Catharine's sword, and would always carry it with her into battle.

"But I never killed anyone with it," she said

[1] mär-tĕl′.

afterwards. "Indeed, I never killed anyone at any time."

Even better than her sword she loved her banner. It was of white linen with fringes of silk, and was embroidered with golden lilies, the emblem of the royal family. On it was painted, as Jeanne said her Voices directed, God seated upon a throne and holding in his hand the globe. On either side of him was a kneeling angel holding a lily. Above were the words, "Jesus—Maria."

On the other side of the banner was Jeanne's newly designed coat-of-arms, a silver dove on a blue shield, with the motto, "In the name of the King of Heaven."

She had also a pennon,[1] on which was painted the Virgin receiving the message of the archangel Gabriel.

So, though the banners of the nobles of France had been dragged in the dust of many battles, the banner of the peasant girl was at last ready to move proudly forward.

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[1] A small, narrow, pointed flag.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SIEGE OF ORLÉANS

WHILE Jeanne and her army were being made ready for war, the people of Orléans were coming near to the end of their strength to endure. It is necessary now to go back to the beginning of the siege, and learn what had happened in the months since October, when the English arrived before the city.

Orléans was a city of 15,000 people. It was proud of its cathedral, its university, its religion, its learning, and its wealth. In size, as compared with a present-day city, it was small, for its thick, high walls extended only for about half a mile east and west by a quarter of a mile north and south. Outside the walls, around the city, was a moat. There were five gates, one leading toward the east, three to the north and west, and one to the bridge over the river Loire. Guarding the walls were thirty-four towers, placed at a bowshot's distance from each other.

The stone bridge that led across the river was built on nineteen arches. One of these, the fifth from the Orléans shore, was built on a boat-shaped island, and here, upon the bridge, was a fort, called the fort of Saint-Antoine.[1] Halfway over was a cross of gilded bronze, called the Belle Croix.[2] At the southern end of the bridge was a small fortified castle with two towers, called the Tourelles[3], and between this and the south shore was a drawbridge leading to an embankment called a "boulevard."

Outside the city walls were some very beautiful suburbs, with gardens, vineyards, and fountains surrounding handsome residences and fine churches and convents. When the siege of the town began, all the people of these suburbs took refuge within the walls, so that the population of Orléans was nearly doubled.

The people had learned in advance that the English were coming, and so they had built barriers at all the gates, and had set up all their seventy-one cannon on the walls. They brought great stones and made them into cannon balls, and they had a large supply of gunpowder. The workmen made thousands of arrows and iron-tipped spears. The authorities purchased large supplies of wheat, wine, and cattle. They were ready for a long siege.

The townsmen were divided into thirty-four companies of guards, one for each tower, to defend the walls. The governor of the city, Sire de Gaucourt,[4] and Dunois, half-brother of the captive duke, went to Chinon to get men and money from the king, while the citizens scoured the country around, offering good pay to all wandering bands of French soldiers who would come and help to defend Orléans.

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[1] săn-tăṅ-twŏṅ′.

[2] bĕl krwä: meaning beautiful cross.

[3] to͞o-rĕl′.

[4] gō-ko͞or′.

On October 12, 1428, the English took possession of the south bank of the Loire at the entrance to the bridge, and began firing upon the city, doing some damage to the buildings. Nine days later they attacked the Tourelles. Citizens and soldiers made a brave defense. Even the women helped, hurrying back and forth across the bridge in long lines to bring pots and dishes full of burning coals and boiling fat which they poured down upon the heads of the besiegers. But in spite of the hard fighting, the Tourelles was captured, and the two sections of the bridge nearest to it were destroyed.

The English soon suffered a great loss, however. Their commander, the Earl of Salisbury, the finest general of their army, climbed one of the towers he had just captured, in order to view the city and plan his assault upon it. As he stood there, he was struck in the head by a cannon ball, and died soon after, leaving his army in confusion for lack of a leader. Sir William Glasdale and the Duke of Suffolk took temporary command, and some weeks later Sir John Talbot arrived as commander-in-chief.

At about this same time the brave Dunois came back from Chinon and entered the city with about eight hundred men, among them the famous La Hire and his soldiers. He brought also an expert gunner, Jean de Montesclere,[1] whose leaden cannon balls did great service, while his jolly spirits and merry jests cheered the heart of everyone who came near him.

At the end of December, that part of the English army that had withdrawn to the westward returned, and began to build palisaded earthworks, called "bastilles," to hem in the city on the west. One was on the south side of the river, one on an island, and two north of the river, on the roads that led from the two western gates. They had also a fortified camp at a place called St. Laurent,[2] a short distance north of the river.

There were still two gates of the city open for soldiers and supplies to enter, so that the townsfolk were in no danger of starving. The English generals soon saw that it would take a long time to encircle this stubborn city with earthworks. The wretched soldiers, buried in mud and snow, were shivering in their flimsy earthen or wooden huts. Every few days they would make an assault on one of the gates, but were always driven back, losing numbers of men to no purpose.

By February there had gathered at Blois a new army, including the noblest knights and soldiers of Auvergne under Charles of Bourbon, Count of Clermont, and a company of Scottish guards. This army set out to meet and destroy Sir John Falstolf, who was coming from Paris with supplies of food and ammunition for the English. Dunois and La Hire led troops from Orléans to aid in this plan. But Clermont was young, foolish, and inexperienced, and the two French armies failed to meet at the proper moment, so that at Rouvray, Falstolf cut them to pieces with great loss of life among the French.

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[1] mŏṅts-klār′.

[2] sȧṅ-lō-räṅ′.

Among the food supplies in the English wagons was a great quantity of dried salt herrings, suitable for food during Lent, which was just beginning. Because these were scattered about over the battlefield, the English, in delight at their victory, called it the "Battle of the Herrings."

This defeat greatly discouraged the French noblemen who had come to help Orléans. One by one they went away, making one excuse or another and taking their men with them. By March, the only general left in the town was Dunois.

Meantime, the English had extended their earthworks so far as to control the gate that led to Paris. Little by little Orléans was being hemmed in. The citizens could defend their walls, but they could not make their enemy go away. They felt themselves deserted and betrayed.

And then, in the first days of March, just as brave Orléans began to despair, strange news was brought by travelers arriving from Gien.[2] A Maid had come out of Lorraine announcing that she was sent by God to raise the siege of Orléans!

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[2] See page 70.

Dunois, thinking it wise to encourage everything that might bring hope to his people, sent two gentlemen to Chinon, as has already been said,[1] to inquire about the Maid. They probably arrived there at about the same time as Jeanne.

During March, the English built another bastille, two miles east of the city on the river bank, around the church of St. Loup.[2] All their forts, however, could not keep supplies from going into the city. The besiegers, poorly paid and underfed, were much hungrier than the townsfolk. But life in the overcrowded town was uncertain and uncomfortable. The merchants who took the risk of bringing food charged large prices for it. Sometimes a cannon ball would fall in a street or square, killing and wounding passers-by. And whenever a sally was made from one of the gates, there was grief for the dead and anxiety for the wounded.

But now the messengers who arrived from Chinon brought hope.

"We have seen the Maid with our own eyes," they said. "She has traveled safely amidst great dangers to reach the King, She promises to raise the siege. She is honest, simple, and wise. All men wonder at the way she rides a horse and handles a lance. Surely God is with her."

News kept arriving.

"The Maid has answered the wise men at Poitiers even as Saint Catharine answered the wise men of Alexandria."

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[1] See page 79.

[2] săṅ-lōō′.

"The Maid is coming, mounted on a white horse, carrying the sword of Saint Catharine and holding the banner of the King of Heaven."

"The Maid is bringing a vast army, and a wagon train full of food sent by the good Queen Yolande."

The town was wild with enthusiasm. Before they saw her, folk believed in the Maid as in God himself. Meantime, all the loyal knights and nobles of France, believing that a chance for victory lay in the enthusiasm of the people for the young girl who was to them a symbol of deliverance, flocked to her standard.

The townsfolk made no more sallies from the gates; they almost ceased to shoot from the walls. They waited. They did not know how nearly worn out the English were, without food, without clothing or shelter, worst of all without horses. They only knew that they could do nothing more for themselves, and that their only hope lay in the deliverer who was on the way.

CHAPTER XIV

JEANNE ARRIVES AT ORLÉANS

ON the morning of the twenty-fourth of April, the people of Tours, crowding to the streets and squares, waved a farewell to their "saint" as she rode out in her shining armor on the way to Blois. Three knights, two pages, two men-at-arms (her brothers), two heralds, her chaplain, and the Archbishop of Rheims made up her escort. That evening they arrived at Blois, where the army waited, some four thousand strong. It already had its leaders; Jeanne was to be its inspiration.

What she saw of her army, however, as she rode about the camp and the city that night and the next day, horrified and distressed her. She had come with the white banner of the King of Heaven; but these drunken, profane, evil-living soldiers were not fit to fight his battles. Men who live by war lose the finer traits of their character; as they grow hard and brutal, they grow also indifferent to holiness and beauty. Religion was for priests and women, these soldiers thought. But Jeanne thought differently.

"Tell them," she said to her captains, "that they must not drink, they must not swear, they must pray and confess their sins."

The captains were dismayed. How could they command their men to do what they did not do themselves?

"No soldier can fight without his wine," said La Hire.

"And as for swearing, they know no other language," added Gilles de Rais,[1] with an oath even as he spoke.

"Then my Lord will not fight for you," answered Jeanne sadly. "Will you drive away by your wickedness the King of Heaven? If the battle is to be won, you must be worthy to fight for my Lord."

Her earnestness was convincing; and she had a way that won men's hearts. Moreover, they could not afford to lose her help; this great army had assembled only because they had heard of her coming. It was absurd, of course, to mix religion and war, and the men would not obey; nevertheless these hardened captains agreed to give the order. More, they promised to go themselves to confession and to hear mass.

Soon there was laughter in the camp, as Jeanne's commands were delivered. "A valiant champion this," the soldiers shouted; "a mighty captain come to save France!"

But even as they laughed and cursed, there rode past, amid a group of war-hardened captains, a slight figure in white armor, with a white banner in her hand, and a grave, pure, earnest face. The laughter died, and some of those who had jeered loudest crossed themselves.

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[1] zhēl dē rā.

"Has Our Lord then sent an angel among us?" they murmured one to another.

"If we do her bidding, perhaps the battle will be won, not lost," growled others. "All else has failed."

By mid-day the churches were full of soldiers kneeling at mass. For two days the priests who followed the army, having been driven by the enemy from their abbeys, had all they could do to hear confessions. Crowds of soldiers gathered around a banner bearing a picture of the crucifixion, beneath which a group of monks chanted holy hymns.

Even La Hire prayed, as he had promised Jeanne. But, being free of soul, the rough soldier preferred to speak to God directly, and not through a priest. "O God," he said, bending unaccustomed knees, "do with me as I would do by you, if you were La Hire and I were God." It was a good and honest prayer.

It was, therefore, a devout army that on the third day was ready to set out from Blois on the way to Orléans. At the head, with their banner, marched the priests, singing "Come, Holy Spirit." With them rode the Maid, her armor glistening, her banner waving. The soldiers followed, escorting six hundred wagons of food and ammunition and four hundred head of cattle. They crossed the bridge and set out across the country at quite a distance back from the river.

At the hour of curfew, when the Loire shone like copper under the sunset light, the priests sang the Angelus and the army halted to encamp for the night in the open. They were halfway to Orléans, but on the opposite side of the river. It would have been too dangerous to approach the town from the west, where it was ringed around with English forts and bastilles, and where there was risk of meeting a newly arriving army in open battle. The council of war had decided to march on the south side of the river to a point east of the city. There they would cross in boats and approach the unblockaded gate on the eastern side.

Of all this Jeanne knew nothing, not being familiar with the geography of the region. She thought she was going straight to Orléans. In her mind were visions of leading her army straight through the English camps and past their forts, calling them to kneel before her standard, scattering their men on every side, and entering Orléans in triumph, but without bloodshed. So exhausted were the English and so fearful of the witch of whom they had heard that they might indeed have been frightened into flight by the Maid's sudden appearance. But such a plan, offering great risk to the precious supply wagons, would have seemed ridiculous to the experienced

French leaders, even if Jeanne had been given a chance to propose it.

It never occurred to them, however, to take her into their council of war. She had come to bring hope, courage, enthusiasm; to fire men's hearts with a new zeal for France, a new devotion to the King. Let her lead the march; but men acquainted with war and its ways must plan the campaign.

So when, at the end of the second day's march, Jeanne saw from the top of a hill the walls and towers of the city she had come to save, and discovered that the river flowed between her and her goal, she was both hurt and angry—hurt because she felt she had been deceived; angry because her wishes had not been consulted. She was lame and tired, too, for she had slept for the first time on the ground in her armor, and the hard metal had bruised her badly.

Altogether, it was a rather irritable saint who met Dunois, coming from Orléans by boat to meet the generals and arrange about the shipping of the food and cattle.

"Are you Dunois of Orléans?" she asked bluntly.

"I am, and I rejoice at your coming," answered the courteous gentleman.

"Was it you," she went on hotly, "who advised that I come here, on this side of the river, instead of coming directly where Talbot and the English are?"

"I and others wiser than I advised so, believing that it was the best way," said Dunois gently.

Probably Jeanne did not know that she was speaking to the wisest statesman and soldier of his time, learned, clever, and brave, prudent and self-controlled. If she had known, it is doubtful whether she would have altered her reply.

"In the name of God!" she burst out; "my Lord's wisdom is wiser than yours! You thought you were deceiving me, but you have deceived yourselves. I bring you better help than ever came to knight or city, the help of the King of Heaven."

But Dunois had too much to do, just then, to stay for her reproaches. The problem of loading and ferrying great quantities of provisions and cattle was troublesome enough. Moreover, the boats on the Loire were sailboats, and the wind was the wrong way. Until it changed, nothing could be done. Meantime, an English force might fall upon them.

So the army and its leaders waited in impatience by the shore, watching the banners and pennons floating in the wind from the east. Jeanne, regaining her good temper, rode to and fro, speaking cheerfully.

"Wait a little," she kept saying. "Everything will reach the city safely."

Watching her, no one noticed that the pennons had ceased to float from the staffs, and were hanging limply. But Dunois's page, who had been sitting on the river bank, suddenly came running with a shout.

"The wind! the wind!" he cried, pointing to the banners streaming to the east.

Instantly all was activity, as the first boats pushed off from shore, each pulling two or three rafts of provisions. Dunois and La Hire looked silently at each other; then they gazed after Jeanne as she rode off in a whirl of excitement.

The rough soldier made the sign of the cross. "Truly we have a saint among us," he said huskily. "Only a miracle could have changed the wind."

"Miracle or not," answered Dunois, "she will put courage into the men. She is like a ray of sunshine from heaven."

When all the supplies had been carried across the river to a town called Chécy,[1] the next duty of the army was to return to Blois and bring up the other half of the provision wagons. When Jeanne learned that they were to go without her, she was very unhappy. She was afraid that, left to themselves, they would slip back into their sinful ways.

"They have all confessed," she pleaded, "and in their company I would not fear all the power of the English."

"But the people of Orléans will not wait any longer for you," urged Dunois. "If I go back to the city without you, I know not what may happen."

"I will go with the soldiers," said Brother Pasquerel. "I will not let them forget Our Lord."

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[1] chā-sē′.

"And we promise to return to you soon," said the captain Gilles de Rais.

So at last she was persuaded. She spent the night and the next day at Chécy, and toward evening, on April 29, set out with her bodyguard to ride to Orléans. She entered it at the eastern gate, riding at the right hand of Dunois. Fully armed, mounted on a white horse, with her white banner before her, her slight figure gleamed in the light of the torches.

The streets were full of men, women, and children, pressing forward to see her, to touch her, to rejoice over her. They had suffered greatly, but now they were comforted. They loved her. They followed after her delightedly, all across the city, to the house of Jacques Boucher,[1] the treasurer of the Duke of Orléans, where she was to be entertained. The house was near the western gate.

Here, in a beautiful and richly furnished dwelling, the peasant girl laid by her armor, ate a simple supper of bread dipped in wine and water, and went to rest. She asked to share the bed of little nine-year-old Charlotte, daughter of her host. The child must have thrilled at the honor of sleeping with the long-looked-for Maid. To Jeanne there must have come a memory of nights in Domremy, when she lay beside her dear Hauviette.

But those times were far away and long ago. She was in Orléans. Tomorrow—the English!

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[1] bo͞o-shā′.

CHAPTER XV

JEANNE MEETS THE ENGLISH

ALTHOUGH Jeanne had come to Orléans with all the appearance of a soldier, her great hope was that she might persuade the English to give up the siege and go away peaceably, without bloodshed. Surely, she thought, they would not dare to disobey a command from the King of Heaven.

With this in mind she had dictated and sent from Blois a letter to the English generals, which was carried to them by herald Guyenne.[1] In it she demanded that they give up to her the keys of all the good French cities which they had taken. She told them that she had come from God to recover the rights of the French king; that she was willing to make peace, but that if they would not of themselves go away to their own country she would do them great harm and drive them out.

"Duke of Bedford," she wrote, "the Maid begs and prays that you will not destroy yourselves."

Until an answer was made to this letter, Jeanne did not wish to attack the English. To her honest peasant mind it did not seem fair to do so. But as yet no answer had come.

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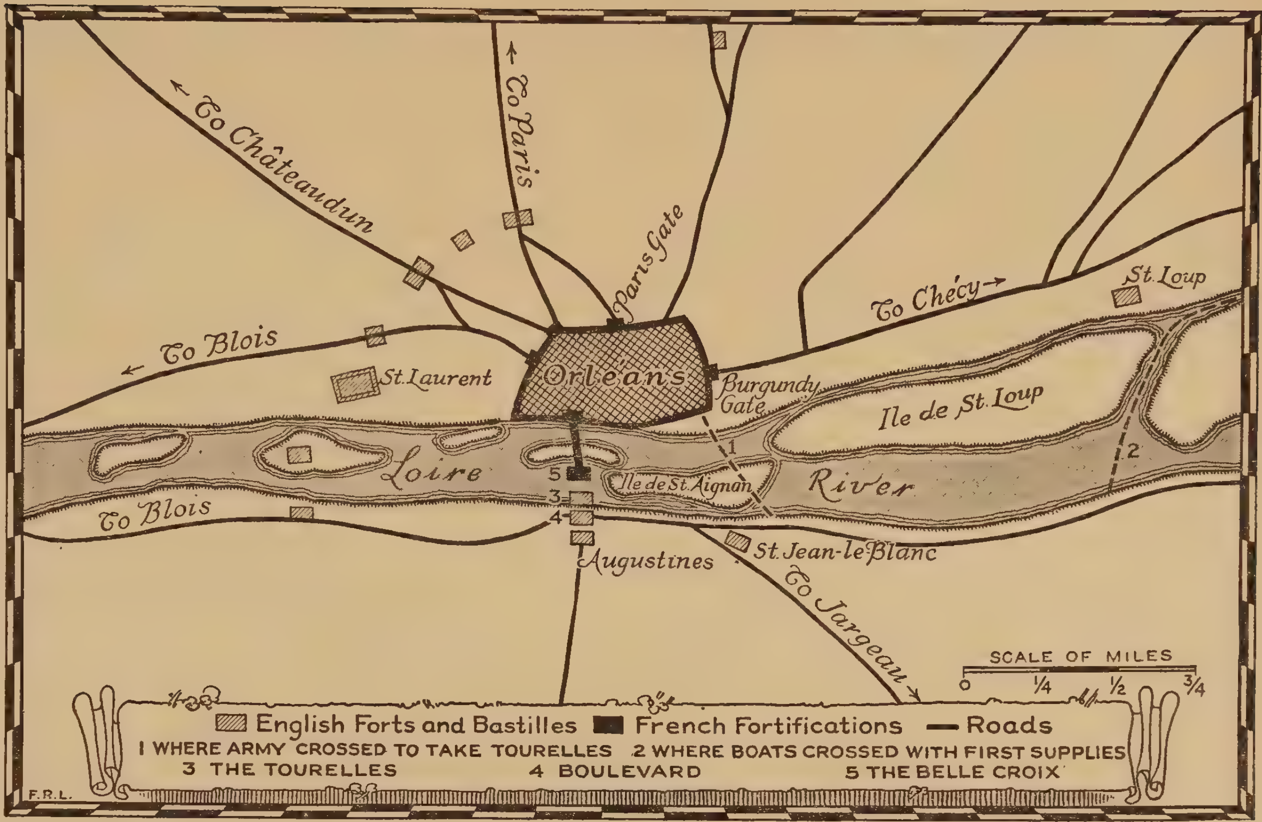
[1] gē-ĕn′.


To Châteaudun
To Paris
Paris Gate
To Blois
St. Laurent
Orléans
Burgundy Gate
To Chécy
St. Loup
Ile de St. Loup
Loire
River
Ile de St. Aignan
To Blois
Augustines
St. Jean-le-Blanc
To Jargeau
1
2
3
4
5
SCALE OF MILES
0
¼
½
¾
▨ English Forts and Bastilles
■ French Fortifications
— Roads
1 WHERE ARMY CROSSED TO TAKE TOURELLES
2 WHERE BOATS CROSSED WITH FIRST SUPPLIES
3 THE TOURELLES
4 BOULEVARD
5 THE BELLE CROIX
F.R.L.

Orléans at the time of the siege

The reason was this. Far from believing Jeanne to be God's messenger, the English were sure she was a witch. They had always suspected the French of using magic; they were sure that their great king, Henry V, had been killed by witchcraft. They knew the same prophecy of Merlin that Jeanne knew; they knew another prophecy, that Henry VI would lose all that his father had gained. They believed superstitiously in what was written in the stars.

So, when Jeanne's letter came, they were filled with rage and fright. They knew how to fight and conquer soldiers; but how could the bravest man fight against a witch? Jeanne seemed as much a devil to them as she seemed an angel to her own army. But all that they could do was to seize her herald, load him with chains, and threaten to burn him at the stake.

Anxious about Guyenne, on April 30 Jeanne sent her other herald to look for him, and again to ask the generals to go away to England. The English answered roughly and sent the second herald back to her.

"They are keeping my companion in order to burn him," he told Jeanne.

"No harm will come to him," she said serenely.

She still hoped that she could make the English believe in her. She spent the day quietly, for no fighting could begin till the army returned from Blois; but at sunset she went out as far as she could on the bridge, to the Belle Croix,[1] within hearing distance of the soldiers in the Tourelles. In her clear, ringing girl's voice she called on the English commander, Sir William Glasdale, to surrender.

Frightened to death by the shining figure touched by the rosy gleams of the setting sun, standing in the protection of the cross, Glasdale hurled at her the lowest insults. Brave knight though he was, he felt no need of chivalry in speaking to a woman of such low character as this one must be, for no decent girl would ride about with an army.

"Cowherd!" he cried to her; "if ever we lay hands on you, we will burn you!"

Disappointed and hurt, but not terrified, Jeanne went back to Boucher's house.

In the three days that still must pass before the return of the army, and of Dunois who had gone to meet it, Jeanne had plenty to do. The people surged around the house, begging her not to wait for the soldiers, but to come and lead them against the English. With great wisdom she mounted her horse and led them indeed, not out of the gates to fight but into the churches to pray.

Having quieted their impatient spirits, she rode out with an escort a little way on the road to Blois, to see for herself the English earthworks. Meeting some English soldiers who guarded the way, she commanded them to surrender.

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[1] See page 115.

"Would you have us surrender to a woman?" they replied, cursing. They heaped shame on the heads of her bodyguard for accompanying a witch and a harlot. But because it would not have been a deed of knightly honor to seize an enemy coming on a peaceful errand, they let her go.

The days passed slowly, but at last, on May 4, when the townsfolk began to think they had been again deserted, the head of the army was seen advancing from the west. The supply train had been sent around to the east of the city, as before; but the troops came boldly toward the line of English forts.

With La Hire and five hundred soldiers, Jeanne rode out to meet her army beyond the English lines. Then, with the chanting priests and their holy banner in advance, the whole force rode past the frowning earthworks back to the city. The enemy watched them sullenly; they were too few to attack this splendid army in the open field, and they lacked horses. They were religious folk, too, and were in doubt whether to fight an army led by priests. And perhaps the generals knew that their men were too much afraid of the witch to be trusted not to lose their wits in a battle.

That afternoon Dunois came to see the Maid, bringing news.

"I hear," he began, "that Falstolf is not far away. He is coming to bring fresh troops and supplies to the English."

Jeanne laughed joyously. "Dunois," she cried, "I command you to let me know of Falstolf's coming as soon as you know of it. Otherwise, I promise you that I will have your head cut off."

"You shall know of it at once," he assured her. But he did not tell her what he was planning for that very afternoon. He still felt that her part in the campaign was to inspire the soldiers with faith and courage, not to plan nor fight.

Two miles east of the city, on the river, was the church of St. Loup, which the English had seized and made into a fort. The boats bringing supplies had to pass by this place. To keep the attention of the men in the fort away from the river, Dunois planned to make a pretended attack upon it, with little idea, however, of taking it.

That afternoon Jeanne lay down to rest, as did also the Sire d'Aulon. But he had scarcely fallen asleep, tired out as he was, when she jumped from her couch and ran to waken him.

"What is it? What is it?" he stammered, sleepily, as she shook him by the arm.

"My Voices!" she cried in great excitement. "They tell me I must go against the English, but I do not know whether they mean against their forts or against Falstolf!"

The good squire could offer her no advice on this point, but he rose stiffly and began to help her on with her armor. He had only begun when loud voices were heard in the street. Jeanne ran to the window to listen.

"There is fighting, they say, at St. Loup," she called. "Our men are being badly beaten."

D'Aulon, without further words, went for his own armor. Jeanne dashed downstairs to the street, called for her horse, finished arming herself with the help of Madame Boucher and Charlotte, mounted, and sent her page Mugot[1] to her room for her banner. To lose no time, he handed it to her through the window as she sat on her horse. Breathless, she galloped down the street that led across the city to the eastern gate, the hoofs of her steed striking sparks from the cobblestones as she rode. Jean d'Aulon and her page, who pursued her in hot haste, overtook her only at the gate, where she had stopped to watch a wounded Frenchman being carried in.

Jeanne looked at him pitifully. "I can never see French blood flow," she shivered, "without the hair rising on my head."

A few soldiers gathered around Jeanne as she passed through the gate, and they all pushed forward toward the scene of the fighting. As they rode, they passed groups of French scattered and retreating. They had not tried very hard to take the fort, but only to occupy the enemy's attention while the supply boats passed, which were now safely by. But Jeanne did not know this; she only knew that her

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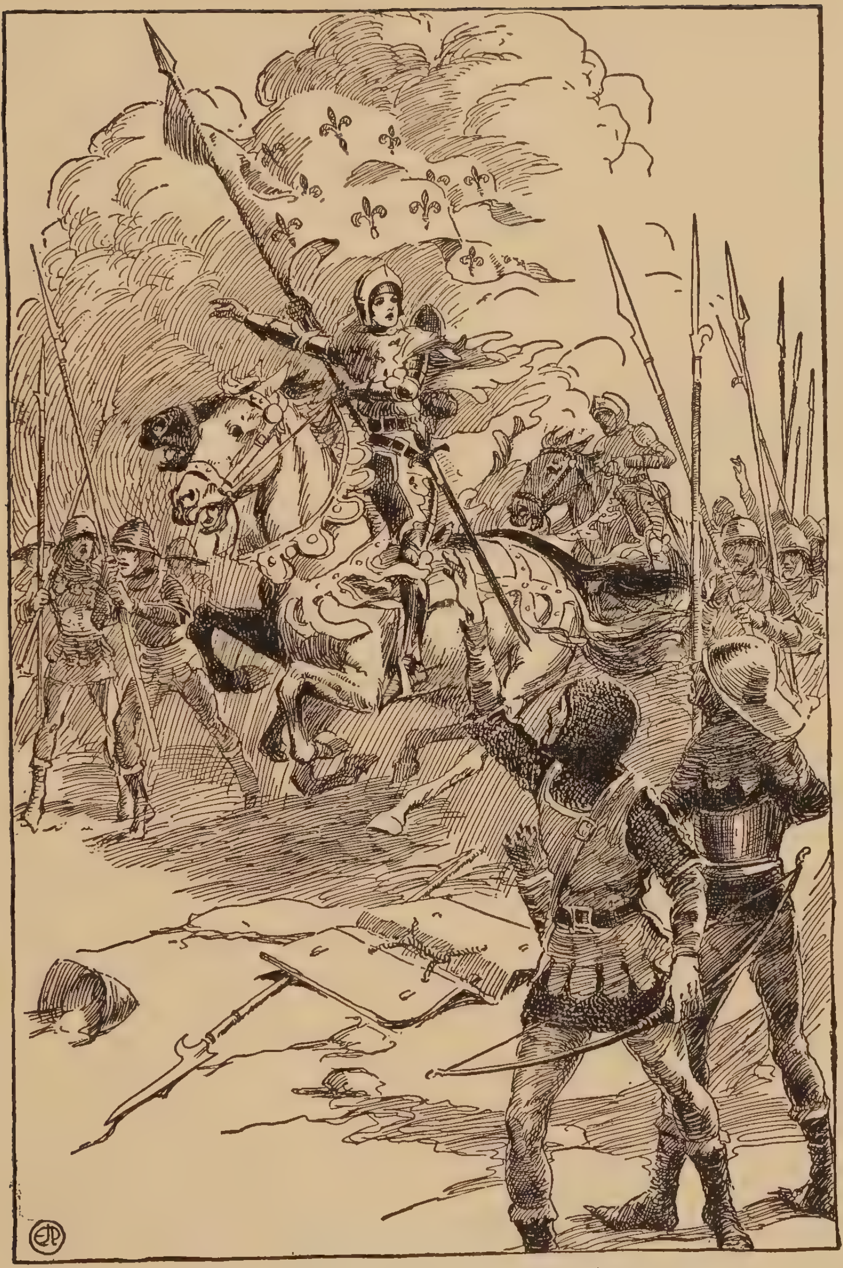
[1] mü-zhō′.



Jeanne rallied the soldiers and led them on army must not retreat. So she rallied these men and led them on. They were her friends, and they knew that she brought them luck; so they followed her.

It was Jeanne's first battle, and she brought to it the rash daring of one who does not realize his danger. Every man there knew more about fighting than she did, but none had so high a courage. When others thought of themselves, she thought of others. Standing at the edge of the moat, under the rain of falling arrows, in the range of the guns, she cheered her soldiers on. Dunois's pretended attack turned into a real one.

After three hours of fighting, the fort was taken and burned. The English fled to the church, but the French routed them out, took some of them prisoners, and killed the rest. Jeanne's heart was torn with distress at their fate.

"Poor souls!" she said, weeping. "They died with their sins unforgiven! I wish I might have spared them."

A few she did spare, those who had found some priests' garments in the church and had put them on as a disguise. She took them prisoner, not allowing them to be harmed. "We must not hurt the clergy," she said with dry humor.

Two good results came of this, the Maid's first battle. The line of communication between the English at Orléans and those at Jargeau,[1] to the east, was broken. Better still, it was evident to the French soldiers that these English devils were merely men and could be beaten.

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[1] zhär-ghō′.

Next day, May 5, was Ascension Day, a holy day, and Jeanne did not fight, though she assisted at a council of war. She wanted to attack the forts to the west, but yielded to the will of Dunois and the other captains, who thought that the Tourelles should be captured first.

That day the Maid sent to the English her last offer of peace. She dictated a short letter to Brother Pasquerel, as follows:

> "Englishmen, you who have no right to the realm of France, the King of Heaven commands you by me, Jeanne the Maid, that you leave your forts and return to your own country. Otherwise I will cause such destruction that it shall be remembered forever. I write this for the third and last time; I will write no more."

She added a postscript after her signature.

> "I would have sent you my letter more honestly, but you detain my heralds. You have kept my herald Guyenne. Send him to me and I will send you some of your men taken at St. Loup. They are not all dead."

This letter Jeanne tied to an arrow, and carried it out upon the bridge to the Belle Croix. There she bade one of the archers on guard to shoot the arrow over to the English in the Tourelles.

"Read!" she called to them as the arrow sped on its way. "Here is news!"

The English caught the arrow, read the letter, and shouted back insulting words which made her weep as she turned back to the city. But soon, in the sound of the vesper bells, in the soft evening breeze from the river, her Voices spoke to her and she was comforted. She whom the saints called "Daughter of God" could well afford to endure harsh names on the lips of frightened enemies.

CHAPTER XVI

THE RAISING OF THE SIEGE

FOR six days the citizens of Orléans had been waiting impatiently for something to happen. The Maid was with them, the army was behind them, and they could no longer be prevented from attacking their enemies. In some way they had learned that Friday, May 6, was the day set for the assault on the Tourelles. For six months, unaided, they had defended their walls, and they did not mean to be kept by newly arrived soldiers from a share in the splendor of victory.

So, early in the morning, all in arms, they hastened in crowds to the eastern gate, which was guarded by the governor of the city, De Gaucourt, and his men. The nobles, expecting such a move on the part of the citizens, had ordered the gate kept closed. But the townsmen, stubbornly bent on taking back their jewel with their own hands, refused to be turned back.

Someone went for the Maid. She came, white with anger.

"You are a wicked man," she cried to Gaucourt, "to hinder these folk from going out. Whether you will or not, they shall go, and will do better things even than we did yesterday."

Encouraged by her voice, the citizens flung themselves on Gaucourt's men, threatening death. There was only one thing left for the brave old nobleman to do. Flinging wide the gate, he raised his sword in air.

"Follow me!" he shouted. "I will be your captain."

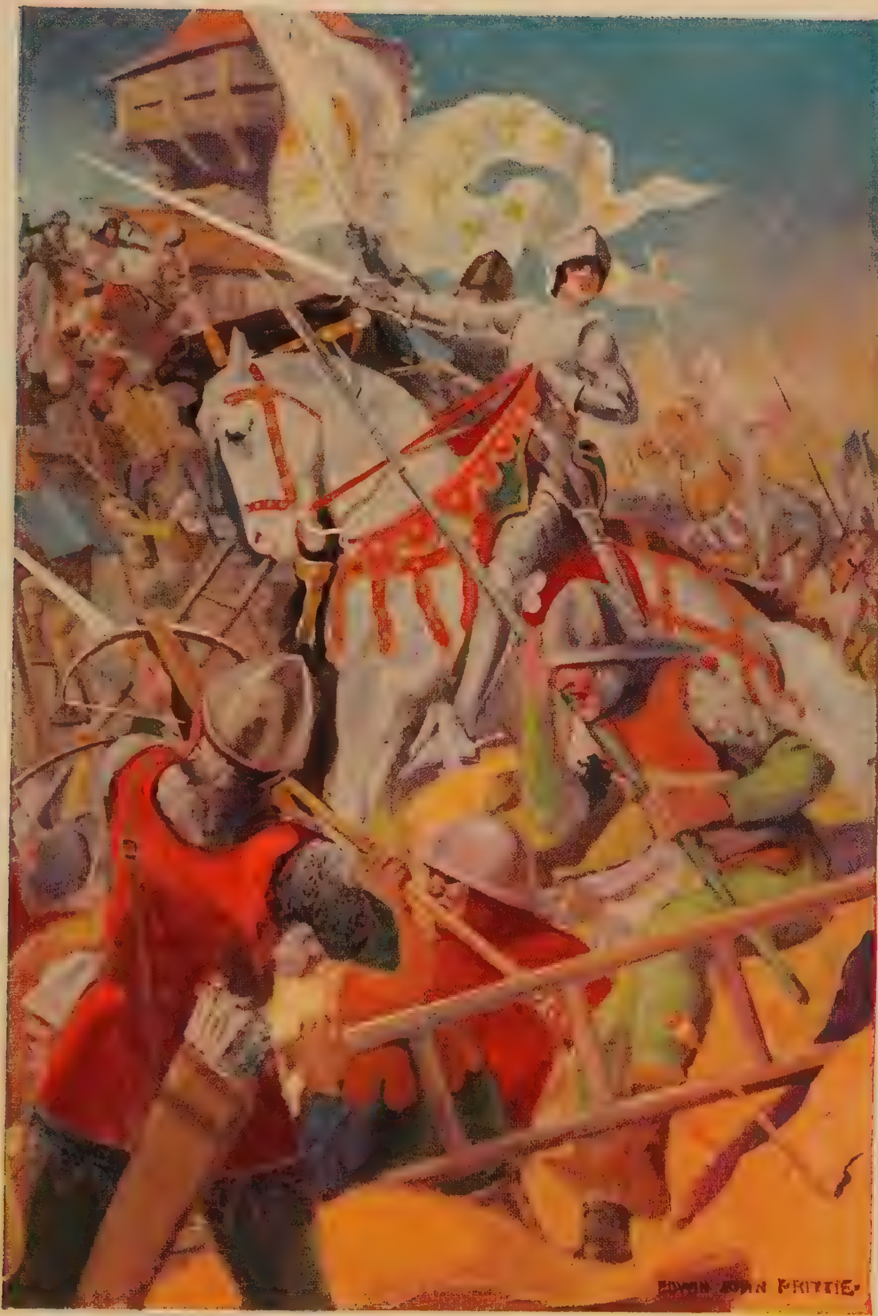
Down to the river they surged, and into the boats moored there. In a few moments they landed on the Island of St. Aignan,[1] above the bridge. From there they easily reached the southern shore, by means of a bridge made of two boats, fastened together. Jeanne was not with them; she had stayed behind to wait for La Hire and his men.

The nearest fort, St. Jean-le-Blanc,[2] stood on the river about half a mile east of the bridgehead. This the assaulters found abandoned, the English having withdrawn from it to their stronger forts at the bridge. So the townsmen marched on to the next fortification. This was the fort of the Augustines, built over the ruins of a monastery, about three hundred feet south of the river. This, and also the boulevard which guarded the drawbridge, must be captured before they could reach the Tourelles.

The Orléaners attacked boldly, but were met with such a shower of stones and arrows that they retreated pell-mell to their bridge of boats, and took refuge on the island. Only the Sire de Gaucourt and

[1] săṅ-tān-yän′.

[2] sȧṅ-zhăṅ′-lĕ-bläṅ′.


EDWIN JOHN PRITTIE

Jeanne dashed back and forth on her horse

his men, with three other brave nobles, made a stand on the rampart of St. Jean-le-Blanc, and held the pursuing English at bay. At three o'clock they were still fighting, weary but gallant, when the Maid arrived with La Hire and his men. They had brought their horses with them in the boats, and rode straight at the enemy. The citizens, with their courage revived, all followed, and they pushed the English back. At the fort of the Augustines, however, they were again repulsed.

Where were the generals? Where was the great army? Jeanne dashed back and forth on her horse between the fort and the river bank, calling for Dunois, De Rais, De Boussac.[1] Their careful plans for the attack had all been disarranged by the headlong movement of the townsmen; they had been delayed to issue new orders. Perhaps they were not sorry to be late, if it would teach these headstrong citizens the lesson not to interfere.

At last, however, Jeanne saw Dunois's banner floating over the island. The army was coming! The new arrivals brought cannon, scaling ladders, battering-rams, and all the other machinery needed for storming a fort. But when all the men and guns were assembled before the Augustines, it was late in the afternoon. When they had taken it by storm, killed or made prisoner most of its defenders, and set fire to it, night was already darkening.

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[1] bōō-säk′.

In the light of the blazing ruin, the soldiers looked beyond it at the Tourelles and the boulevard which guarded it, looming black and forbidding, and muttered to each other:

"It would need a month to take it!"

As it was too late for any more fighting that night, soldiers and citizens camped before the walls they hoped to scale tomorrow. Food and drink were brought to them from the town. The generals went back to the city, taking Jeanne with them, though she did not wish to go. They knew that she needed rest, and that a slight wound in her foot must be cared for.

Perhaps this, her first hurt in warfare, frightened her a little, or perhaps she was only tired out, when she said to Brother Pasquerel, as they rose from supper:

"Stay near me all day tomorrow. I have much work to do, and I feel sure that I am going to be wounded."

Once before, at Chinon, Jeanne had said that she would be wounded during the campaign. Often a soldier in battle has such a premonition of his danger.

However, the Maid went peacefully to sleep that night, like the healthy child she was. Not so her generals. They had an important matter to consider. If the city was left unguarded next day, would not Talbot and the English from the forts to the west take possession of the undefended town? Was it not better, then, to defeat Talbot's forces in the open field and leave the Tourelles till afterward? Yet the townsfolk would never endure being brought back in apparent surrender from under the very walls of the Tourelles.

Whatever arguments may have been raised on one side and the other, the decision of the council of war was to finish the piece of work they had begun, and not to waste the success already made. They would take a chance on Talbot.

The inexperienced Jeanne did not doubt that the Tourelles would be attacked next day. She never even thought of any reason for not doing so. At dawn she was ready to start. As she went out of the house, a fisherman was bringing in a shad. Madame Boucher urged her guest to wait and have it for breakfast.

Jeanne answered merrily, "We will have it for supper, and I will bring you an Englishman to eat his share of it. And," she added, "we will come back over the bridge."

It was one hundred ninety-nine days since anyone had crossed the bridge.

Early that morning all the generals were across the river with their troops, and Jeanne with them. They had a huge supply of arrows and spears, cannon balls and powder, guns and scaling ladders. It was five thousand assailants against six hundred defenders. Yet the attack was difficult. There were too many of the French to be in action all at one time. The horsemen were not of much use against an embankment; the citizens, though eager, were not very steady. And Dunois, the bravest of the soldiers, was constantly anxious for fear Talbot should fall upon the undefended city.

Only a few men at a time could attempt to scale the walls. The rest looked on. Twenty times the soldiers tried to cross the ditch carrying their ladders; twenty times they were driven back by the gallant English. The noblemen, experienced in war, were cautious; the captains economized their men; the citizens were not by nature warriors. Only the Maid threw her whole soul into the fight.

"Be of good courage," she kept calling. "Do not draw back. You will soon have the fort."

At one o'clock, after an hour's rest for dinner, a fresh attack was made. As Jeanne, carrying the first ladder, placed it against the wall, she felt a sharp pain in her right shoulder, and fell back, frightened and fainting. Her men, rushing up, saw that an arrow had pierced her shoulder, shot from a crossbow with such force that it had gone quite through her body.

They carried her apart, out of the way of the fighting, while a loud cheer rose from the English on the walls.

"The witch is wounded," they cried to each other. "She will fight no more."

"A witch loses her power when her blood flows," said some.

Brother Pasquerel and the page Mugot bent anxiously over the crumpled girlish figure on the ground. Some soldiers crowded around.

"Let us say a charm to stop the bleeding," said one. This was a remedy often used in those superstitious days.

Though she was weeping with pain, Jeanne heard the words. To use a magic charm was to ask the devil for aid. She was horrified at the thought.

"I would rather die," she gasped out, "than to commit such a mortal sin." In a moment she added, "I know that I must die, though I do not know when or how. If anyone knows a right way to heal my wound, I should be glad not to die now."

The arrow was drawn, and a bandage of lard and olive oil bound about the wound. For awhile Jeanne lay exhausted and weeping, no warrior maid, but just a hurt child. Then she heard the voices of her saints and felt their comforting touch, and her strength and courage came back. She rose and called for her armor.

The battle was going badly for the French. The sun was low, and the men were weary. Dunois had just decided to march his army back to the city when the Maid, weak and white, but brave as ever, appeared before him.

"Wait a little," she begged. "We shall enter very soon. Let the men rest for awhile, and wait for me."

She was helped upon her horse, and rode away to a vineyard on the hillside. There, in the peace and quiet of a country scene like those at home, she prayed. In the rustling of the tender leaves on the spring vines, in the soft breeze, she heard her Voices.

While she was gone, the Sire d'Aulon undertook a brave deed. Seeing Jeanne's banner in the hands of a soldier, he thought that if this flag were carried forward to the ditch, the soldiers would follow to prevent its being captured, and would scale the wall after it. He said to the soldier:

"If I enter the ditch and advance to the foot of the rampart, will you follow me?"

The soldier promised, and D'Aulon went forward, holding his shield before him.

Just at that moment Jeanne returned to the battle. She saw her beloved banner in the hands of a soldier whom she did not know, feared for its safety, and ran to seize it just as its bearer was going down into the ditch after D'Aulon. She caught the end of it, crying out:

"My banner! My banner!"

The soldier could not look back, and did not know who had caught hold of the flag. He held it tightly. It shook in the grasp of them both. Seeing it shaken, the lords and captains at a distance thought a signal was being given, and rushed to rally about it.

D'Aulon, meanwhile, had reached the foot of the wall. He looked about for the banner, and saw it as yet on the other side of the ditch.

"Ha, sirrah!" he cried. "Is this what you promised me?"

At this call the soldier dragged the banner from Jeanne's grasp and dashed with it to D'Aulon's side. In a flash she understood.

"When the edge of my banner touches the wall," she cried, "go forward! All will be yours!"

"It touches, Jeanne," cried a gentleman. And, at the word, nobles and townsmen, soldiers and bowmen flung themselves desperately across the ditch, swarmed up the wall and over it, and saw the English giving ground before them. Horrified at the return of the witch, the defenders felt the day was lost. Fighting every inch of the way, with their faces proudly toward their enemy, Glasdale and the gallant noblemen with him covered the retreat of their men toward the Tourelles. Above their heads floated even in defeat an ancient flag, carried through eighty years to victory.

On the rampart in her shining armor, above the battle, stood the Maid. Her face was sad. In a voice choked with sobs she cried:

"Glasdale! Glasdale! Surrender to the King of

Heaven! You called me evil names, but I have great pity for your soul!"

Meantime, the townsfolk had been busy back in the city. From a rain gutter they had made a slim, narrow bridge, and flung it across the broken arch[1] between the Belle Croix and the Tourelles. Over this a line of men passed to the attack. A great barge, too, had been launched, full of materials which would burn quickly. This was towed beneath the wooden bridge that the English had built from the boulevard to the Tourelles. When the barge was just under the bridge, it was set on fire. Through the midst of the flames, the six hundred soldiers from the boulevard fought their way to the castle. But when Glasdale and the other English nobles, the last to leave the shore, stepped upon the planking, the burned timbers gave way under their feet. Still carrying the old battle flag, and weighed down by their armor, they sank forever beneath the dark water.

While Jeanne wept at Glasdale's fate, the fugitives from the boulevard were met by the men from the city who had crossed the makeshift bridge. These lowered the drawbridge for the French from the boulevard to cross. The fate of the English was sealed. All who were not killed were taken captive.

When the last cries of battle had died into silence in the gloomy night, the French leaders anxiously looked across the river to the place where Talbot's camp fires gleamed. Though he had not moved to help the defenders of the Tourelles, surely now he would come to take revenge for them.

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[1] See page 115.

But there was no movement from the English camp. Talbot feared to leave his fortifications for fear some of these apparently numberless French soldiers would seize them in his absence.

In three hours the broken arches of the bridge were temporarily replaced. Across it, as Jeanne had promised, the victorious army returned into the city. All the bells rang. The Te Deum[1] was sung in the cathedral. The rejoicing townsfolk thronged the streets. But it was a very weary, heavy-hearted girl who was escorted in triumph back to the Boucher dwelling. She could not eat the shad that had been saved for her supper. With her aching wound freshly bandaged she sank exhausted into bed.

She had thought she would rejoice at victory. Well, victory was good. But she had not known before how deep would be her grief for the souls of her gallant enemies.

Next day was Sunday. At dawn the watchers from the walls saw the entire English army drawn up in battle array before the walls to the west. At once the French marched out and formed in similar ranks facing them.

Someone asked the Maid, "Is it right to fight today, Sunday?"

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[1] An anthem beginning "We praise Thee, O God."

She answered, "To honor the holy day, let us not begin the battle. Do not attack the English; but, if they attack you, defend yourselves boldly."

Then she bade the priests set up an altar and a cross before the army, and two masses were sung. The soldiers listened devoutly. At the end, Jeanne inquired:

"Have the English their faces toward us?"

"No, no!" cried many voices. "They have turned their backs! They are going away!"

"Let us follow them!" shouted others.

"No," said Jeanne. "It is not pleasing to my Lord that we fight today. Another time you will have them. Come and let us give thanks to God."

What had happened was this. The English had held a council of war during the night. With the losses in the Tourelles, they knew themselves outnumbered. Their ring around the town was almost destroyed. It was useless to stay longer, and they were not strong enough to make an attack. They must retire, reinforce, and reorganize their discouraged army, and try again later, after Falstolf's forces had arrived from Paris. At present, the spirit of the soldiers was shattered by their fear of the witch.

So they drew up in threatening array before the city, offering battle, so as to keep their departure from looking like the retreat which it was, and then marched off in good order. Frenchmen who followed a few miles reported that they had withdrawn to Meung,[1] a little way down the river.

In the English bastilles were found some sick soldiers, some French prisoners, among them the herald Guyenne, and a few guns, which were taken to the city. Then the forts were destroyed.

All day solemn processions moved through the streets. A sermon was preached before great crowds in the cathedral. Clergy, nobles, captains, soldiers, townsfolk filled the churches. Everywhere in the streets echoed the glad cry, "Noël[2]! Good news!"

And ever since that day, the city of Orléans has kept May 8 as a festival day in memory of its deliverance by the Maid from the borders of Lorraine.

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[1] mŭṅ.

[2] nō-ĕl′.

CHAPTER XVII

IN PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY

THE first undertaking to which Jeanne had felt herself called was finished; there was nothing more for her to do at Orléans. Noblemen and their armies began to scatter to other strongholds that needed them, and Jeanne was eager to return to the King of Chinon and set out upon her second task—the journey to Rheims for his coronation.

So, the next morning, in spite of her wound, armed and mounted, riding through streets crowded with grateful people, she said good-by to the folk whose homes she had saved. She would not accept their thanks for herself.

"It was the King of Heaven who fought for you," she kept saying. "Give thanks to Him."

That day she rode to Blois, where she rested two days. At the next city, Tours, she was met by Charles himself, who had come from Chinon to receive her with the honor due a victor. She rode straight to him, her banner in her hand, drew off her cap, and bent her head low over her horse. The King, his face radiant with joy, drew off his hat in turn, raised her up with his own hand, and embraced her.

Then they rode together to the King's palace in that city.

There they stayed ten days. The delay seemed very useless to Jeanne, in her eagerness to reach Rheims; but there were reasons for it which she did not understand.

Although the English had been driven from before Orléans, they were by no means defeated. They held several strongly fortified towns on the Loire. Sir John Talbot's army was a danger, also, for no one knew just where it had disappeared to. The Duke of Bedford, ruling in Paris for his little nephew, Henry VI, was gathering a new army.

Moreover, as usual, Charles had no money with which to carry on the war. He had difficulty even in paying the soldiers who had fought at Orléans. He was also still much under the influence of La Trémouille, who was so rich that he could make the King do as he wished by lending him money. This tricky scoundrel was not anxious to have the King crowned, or France united in patriotic effort, for these achievements would lessen his own power.

So the captains of the army and the counselors of the realm consulted together at Tours, while day after day Jeanne begged the Dauphin to start at once for Rheims. She could not understand why so much talking and planning needed to be done. If they once started, God would open the way for them.

"I shall last only a year," she said over and over. "Only think how much must be done in that year! I must drive the English out of France, I must see you crowned at Rheims, and I must set the Duke of Orléans free from his English prison."

One day, when the King was holding a secret council in a private room, she could not bear it any longer. She knocked at the door and entered. Inside with Charles were his confessor, Dunois, and two other noblemen. Jeanne knelt before the King.

"Gentle Dauphin," she said, "do not hold so many long council meetings. Come at once to Rheims to receive your crown."

The King looked at her kindly, but made no answer. Lord Harcourt, curious about the Maid's angel visitors, thought it a good chance to ask questions.

"Does your Council tell you these things?" he inquired. Jeanne always spoke of the saints and angels as her "Council."

When she assented, he pursued, "Are you willing to describe here, in the presence of the King, the way in which your Council speaks to you?"

Jeanne flushed, for she never talked of these sacred matters. The King, wishing to spare her embarrassment, gently added his request to Harcourt's. She replied finally:

"I see what you wish to know, and I will tell you gladly. When I am sad because someone does not believe what I say at the command of God, I go away by myself and complain to God of my trouble. When my prayer is done, I hear a voice which says to me, 'Daughter of God, go forward! I will be thy help!' Then I am very happy. Indeed, I should like always to hear this voice."

It was her way of telling the King how much his doubts hurt her. He was deeply impressed; but he took no further action than to remove with his court to Loches,[1] twenty miles away, where he had a fine castle. But Jeanne did not enjoy the luxury which surrounded her, and she was frightened at the devotion of the people, fearing that she would grow proud in receiving more honor than she deserved.

While the King and his council debated, the army scattered. When at last, at the end of May, they made up their minds to try to capture the towns which the English held on the Loire, Jargeau, Meung, and Beaugency,[2] it was necessary to gather another army. The rallying place was near Selles, about twenty miles southeast of Blois, and the commander was to be the Duke of Alençon, the young prince whom Jeanne admired so much.

As soon as it was known that the Maid was again to accompany the army, the soldiers came flocking back, and cities and noblemen sent gifts of provisions and money. Lodged in the camp in the midst of them all, Jeanne led almost the life of a nun. She ate and drank very little. She went often to confession and communion. Every day at vespers she had her beloved church bells rung to summon the monks and friars for evensong, and while they chanted, she prayed.

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[1] lŏsh.

[2] bō-zhȧn-sē′.

Her religious fervor, however, did not keep her from a truly feminine interest in dress. Her costume at this time was that of a noble of the court, including a small hat, doublet and hose, a fine fur-trimmed silken surcoat, and laced boots. Later, the Duke of Orléans sent an order to his treasurer, Jacques Boucher, to buy and have made for Jeanne two splendid robes—probably loose cloth or velvet tunics, slashed at the sides and belted, to be worn over her armor. One was to be of crimson and one of green, and both were to be richly lined with white satin.

These beautiful things were awaiting Jeanne in Madame Boucher's care, the next time she returned to Orléans. How the young girl's eyes must have sparkled when she saw them! Half a year ago, her best dress had been a peasant's shabby frock of red homespun, and, like any other girl, she had often longed for pretty clothes.

On June 11 the army was put in motion, departing from Selles to Jargeau, twelve miles up the river on the south shore. All Jeanne's old friends were with her—Dunois, De Boussac, De Rais, La Hire, and the rest. The people of Orléans, in gratitude to the Maid, gave money and wheat in large amounts to pay and feed the soldiers. They sent carpenters and masons to assist in the siege; they lent their cannon and their gunners, as well as all the ammunition and arrows, ropes and ladders, needed for an assault.

Jargeau was held by the English Earl of Suffolk and his two brothers, the De la Poles. They had only a small force, but the place was so well fortified that they did not fear capture. Two towers guarded the bridge. Five hundred knights and men-at-arms and two hundred picked archers were on the walls. The French, looking up at the frowning ramparts, hesitated, as they so often did, uncertain of their power.

"There are too many of them," the soldiers murmured. "It is too well defended."

But Jeanne would have no hesitation. "Do not be afraid of their numbers," she cried. "Make the assault boldly, for my Lord conducts our work. If I were not sure of this," she added to those near her, "I should rather be at home keeping the sheep than expose myself to such great dangers."

As it was late afternoon, the French planned the attack for the next day. After a brief skirmish in which they drove back an attacking party of English who issued from the gate, the army encamped for the night in the suburbs of the town. It was a dangerous thing to do. The Duke of Alençon said later:

"We must believe that God was with us; for the camp was so poorly guarded that if the English had come out of the city, we should have run great risk."

In the morning all the Orléans cannon were turned against the walls, and one great gun, called affectionately "The Shepherdess," in three shots made a breach in the wall through which the besiegers could enter. Jeanne, with her banner unfurled, leaped at once into the ditch amid a shower of arrows and bullets, crying, "Forward! to the assault!"

The Duke of Alençon, close beside her, tried to hold her back, as he was not sure the breach was wide enough for storming.

"Do not doubt," urged Jeanne. "It is right to work when God wills it. Work, and God will work also." Then, seeing he still hesitated, she added with a smile, "Gentle Duke, are you afraid? Do you not know that I promised your wife to bring you safely back?"

It was not long before she kept that promise. As she and he stood watching their men swarming toward the breach in the wall, placing their ladders, fighting their way along, she cried out suddenly, "Step aside!" She pointed to one of the English guns. "That gun is going to kill you."

The Duke moved a little way off. A moment later, a gentleman who had stepped into the place he left was killed by that very gun. Jeanne would have warned him too, if she had not already rushed forward with the soldiers.

Carrying her banner, she began to mount one of the ladders. Halfway up she was struck by a stone; her banner was torn and her helmet crushed. She fell back, but only for a moment.

"Friends, friends, up! up!" she shouted. "My Lord has condemned the English and they are ours! Be of good courage."

It was true. Over the wall went the French; fleeing before them went the English, too few to resist. They tried to gain the bridge, but their pursuers were upon them. Only a few escaped across the river; most of the common soldiers were killed, while the gentlemen were captured and held for ransom. The town was sacked and the old church pillaged; for warfare in the fifteenth century, as in any other time, was brutal.

The Earl of Suffolk was overtaken and captured upon the bridge by the squire Guillaume Regnault.[1] The nobleman turned on his captor, sword drawn.

"Are you a gentleman?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Are you a knight?"

"No."

Now it would have been a disgrace for a nobleman to yield to anyone less in rank than a knight.

[1] gē-yōm′ rān-yō′.

"Kneel down," said the Earl. Tapping Regnault on the shoulder with his sword, he said to him, "I dub thee knight on the field of battle. Rise, Sire Guillaume de Regnault." Then, with a graceful bow, he handed the sword to the newly made nobleman.

The victorious army returned to Orléans, ready to move on to the capture of the other English towns down the river. Two days later they marched along the south shore to the bridge that led to Meung, captured the fort at the head of the bridge and left soldiers there to guard it, and next day passed on to Beaugency, five miles farther. Its defenders withdrew into the castle, leaving the town open to the French. A guard was set outside the castle to prevent the English from escaping.

And now, before the next move was planned, something unexpected happened. News came from Arthur of Brittany, the Sire de Richemont,[1] Lord High Constable of France, that he was approaching with twelve hundred men to join the King's army and help in the siege. Now this was very embarrassing for the Duke of Alençon. The reason was as follows.

Some years before, Richemont had been in great power at court, and had made great efforts to drive out the English. The men who had been the King's favorites before the Constable's arrival, however, especially La Trémouille, were jealous and angry. They had influenced the King against Richemont, and Charles had dismissed him from court, believing him to be his enemy, and had forbidden him to fight in the armies of France. However, though Richemont hated La Trémouille, he merely pitied the weak King, and he loved France. So he had risked the King's displeasure and returned from exile.

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[1] rēsh′môṅ.

What should the young Duke do about it? If he obeyed the King and refused Richemont's help, he would lose twelve hundred valiant soldiers. But if he accepted Richemont, whom he admired and who was his uncle, he would be disloyal to the King.

"If he joins us, I must leave the army," he said to Jeanne. And in spite of the protests of La Hire and other captains, who thought the Constable a brave gentleman, he sent word back to Richemont that, if he came any nearer, the army would come to meet him in battle.

Next morning, June 17, this discussion was ended by startling news. The English were coming! Talbot's army had gone toward Paris to meet Falstolf's army, and together they were marching back toward the Loire to relieve Beaugency. Rather than retreat before these great numbers, Jeanne persuaded the Duke to accept the help of Richemont.

He set out, therefore, to meet him, accompanied by Jeanne, Dunois, and the De Laval brothers. Soon they encountered a fine cavalcade, which drew up while a dark little man, frowning and thinlipped, dismounted. Jeanne greeted him respectfully, and he said to her:

"Jeanne, I was told that you were coming to fight me. I do not know whether you are from God or not. If you are, I do not fear you at all, for God knows my heart. If you are from the devil, I fear you still less."

The Maid liked a soldier who spoke out his mind thus honestly. At her request Alençon made no more objections to his presence, Joining the Maid and the Duke, Richemont rode with them back toward Beaugency. As they neared it, one of La Hire's men dashed up to the Duke.

"The English are marching upon us," he cried. "There are thousands of them down there."

Indeed, it was the whole English army that they had to face.

In battle array the French marched northward to meet the enemy, and in front of the town formed upon a little hill. Said La Hire, scanning the plain before them:

"The English are in order of battle and ready to fight."

"Strike boldly," Jeanne answered. "They will flee."

The English dismounted. The archers drew their bows ready to shoot. The Duke of Alençon, uncertain whether to hold his position or to march forward, asked the Maid her opinion. Her answer puzzled him.

"Have good spurs, all of you!" she said.

"What!" he cried. "Shall we run away, then?"

"No," she replied calmly. "Go toward them, for they will flee and will not stop, and they will be put to shame. You will need spurs to follow them."

However, it was late in the day to begin a battle, so the French army did not move. Soon two heralds came from the English, offering three knights to fight in single combat with three French knights. The French leaders knew that this meant their enemy felt too weak to engage in open battle, and that to accept it would be to throw away a chance of victory. So they sent back the message:

"Go to rest for today, for it is late enough. To-morrow, if God will, we shall see you nearer by."

So the English went to camp for the night at Meung, which their forces still held, although the French held the southern end of the bridge.

All that day, meanwhile, the Orléans cannon, again faithfully lent to the Maid, had bombarded the square stone tower of the castle at Beaugency. At midnight the English agreed to surrender if they might depart unharmed, keeping their horses and armor. So at dawn they marched out, five hundred of them, and made their way to the castle of Meung, where their countrymen were.

Next morning, when the French went to seek their foes at Meung, no English were to be found.

Having learned from the refugees of Beaugency that that place had been surrendered, they had abandoned Meung also, knowing themselves outnumbered. They had marched away with all their guns, wagons, ammunition, and food supplies. Somewhere in the wide, tree-covered plain stretching to the northward they were escaping the destruction that at last the French were strong enough to bring upon them. They must be overtaken—but where?

La Hire knew the region; his men led the advance, with Dunois and De Boussac. Jeanne was kept for safety at the rear; the army would take no chance of losing the Maid who brought them victory. They all rode at full speed, fearing their prey would escape. Two hours past noon they came in sight of a village called Patay.[1]

The wooded plain was an excellent hunting ground, full of all sorts of game. By chance, the foremost riders started a deer, which, darting out of a thicket, made for the shelter of a ravine. All unexpectedly, from behind hedges and from within thickets sounded hearty English voices raising the huntsman's cry. For the English were then, as they are today, a nation of sportsmen, and the men in ambush forgot, in the thrill of seeing the deer, the fact that the French were near.

So the King's army had found its enemy, and the hour for the fight had come.

[1] på-tā′.

What had happened was this. The English scouts had seen the French advancing. The English were five thousand; the French, twelve thousand. Sir John Talbot had drawn up his advance guard with their guns at the edge of a wood, with their wagons lined up as a rampart before them. He himself, with five hundred picked archers, took position behind the hedges on both sides of a lane through which the French must pass. These two bodies of men would hold the French back, thought Talbot, until the main part of the English army, under Falstolf, had had time to make its escape from a battle sure to be disastrous.

The part of the army under Falstolf, however, was still in a dangerous position when the accident of the deer told the French of their whereabouts. La Hire's soldiers, galloping up, found the lane of archers and cut them to pieces. Falstolf hurried his men to join the advance guard and make a stand at the wood. But the men already posted at the wood mistook this movement for a general retreat. They left their guns and wagons, and fled toward the Paris road, upon which the whole army followed them in wild panic. Witchcraft and magic, they were sure, pursued hard after them; their leaders could not stop the flight.

The battle of Patay was not a battle; it was a rout, a pursuit, and a massacre. Two thousand English fell. Sir John Talbot was taken prisoner, with two hundred others. Falstolf, broken-hearted, escaped with the remnant of the army and took the road for Paris.

What part had Jeanne in this frightful battle? No one knows. She was hardly needed to stir the fighting spirit of her men. The memory of eighty years of defeat was enough for that, now that they had their chance for revenge upon their hated enemy. Once the slaughter began, she must have stood apart, weeping under her white banner for a cruel tragedy that yet was necessary for the life of France.

One incident of her is known. Her page De Conte saw her seated on the ground supporting against her shoulder a dying English soldier who was gasping out his confession to a priest she had summoned. He was a prisoner whom a French soldier in charge of him had struck and killed. It is easy to imagine the white heat of anger with which she reproached that ungallant Frenchman.

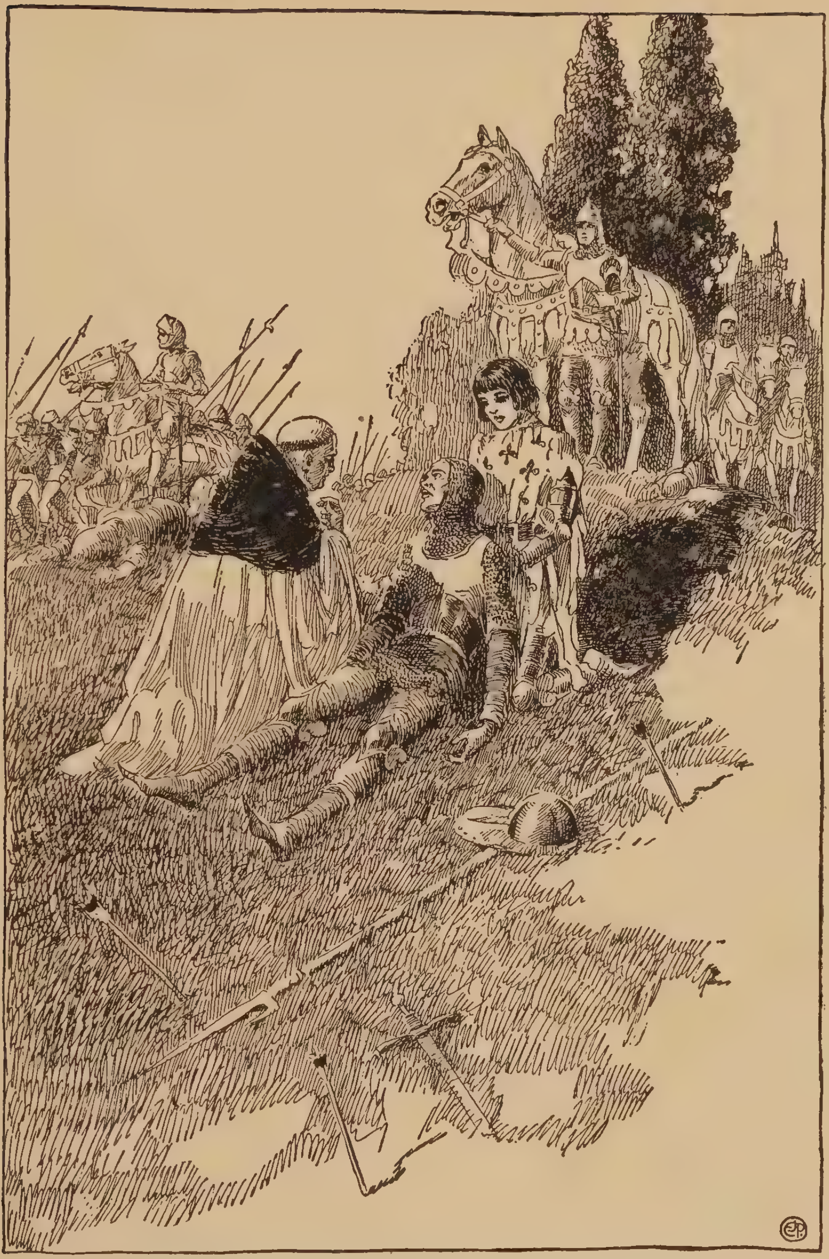
When all was over, the old lion Talbot was brought before the French leaders.

"You did not think this morning," said the young Duke, "that this would happen to you."

"It is the fortune of war," said Talbot grimly. It was a gallant enemy that the French had conquered that day.

Victorious, the army returned to Orléans. The Loire was free.

"Now," thought Jeanne, "we shall go to Rheims."



Jeanne supported against her shoulder a dying English soldier

CHAPTER XVIII

TO RHEIMS!

ON June 19, the day after the victory of Patay, the triumphant army returned to Orléans. Great rejoicing was there. The city expected that the King would come to welcome Jeanne, as he had welcomed her before in Tours. The citizens made elaborate preparations to receive him; the streets were bright with gayly colored robes and tapestries, hung from the windows and balconies to honor the royal visitor. But no king came to ride those decorated streets or greet the disappointed townsfolk. Instead, he was visiting La Trémouille at the latter's castle of Sully, twenty miles east of Orléans.

It was to La Trémouille's interest to keep the King diverted. The more the fighting spirit of France rose, the less would be the power of the crafty politician. It was not his plan at all that Charles should be crowned at Rheims and enter Paris as a victorious king at the head of a conquering army and a loyal people. He preferred a king who was a puppet, moving only when La Trémouille pulled the strings.

Jeanne knew nothing of this. But she could not understand why her Dauphin idled his time away in a luxurious castle. It was a strange prince who had to be led by force to his triumph. But since he did not come to Orléans, she mounted and rode to Sully. She urged him to action; she begged him to forgive and take back Richemont. He would do neither, and she went away disheartened.

Three days later the court moved nearer to Orléans, to the King's castle of Châteauneuf. Jeanne rode out and met Charles on the way. He received her with his usual kindness.

"I am sorry," he said, "for all the hardships which you have endured. You work too hard. You must promise me now to rest."

Jeanne burst into tears at his lack of understanding. "O gentle Dauphin," she wept, "do not doubt any longer. Come to Rheims. You will gain all your kingdom and will soon be crowned."

Charles was distressed by her grief. When he reached Châteauneuf, he began again to hold councils. To his surprise, many of his nobles and captains agreed with Jeanne that he should go at once to Rheims. No one, not even the Maid, seems to have thought of marching direct to Paris, as it would have been wise to do.

In Paris, when the news of Patay had arrived, there had been almost a panic. Everyone expected the victorious French army to enter and sack the city. Bedford, ruling for his little nephew the King of England, sent home for fresh troops, but even he was fearful that they might not come in time. Had he been in command of the French armies, he would have marched direct from Patay to Paris, and he judged his enemies by himself.

But Paris was beyond the dreams of Charles and his council of war. The journey to Rheims was in the end decided upon, and the King went to Gien, eastward on the Loire, to assemble the army. There, too, came Jeanne, the Duke of Alençon, and all the famous captains of the Orléans campaign.

The spirit of patriotism which La Trémouille feared was beginning to sweep over France. From every side there flocked to the royal banner with the lilies gentlemen, nobles, citizens of all ranks, even peasants and men of the working classes. Suppose there was no money to pay them with? They offered to serve for nothing. Knights too poor to buy armor befitting their rank undertook to play the humble part of archers or men-at-arms. They asked only to shed their blood for France. If La Trémouille had not held back the King, it was an army that could have swept everything before it.

From Gien the Maid wrote letters to the cities which in all parts of France had remained loyal to the King. One of these letters, to the citizens of Tournay,[1] has been preserved. In it she says, after giving the news of victory:

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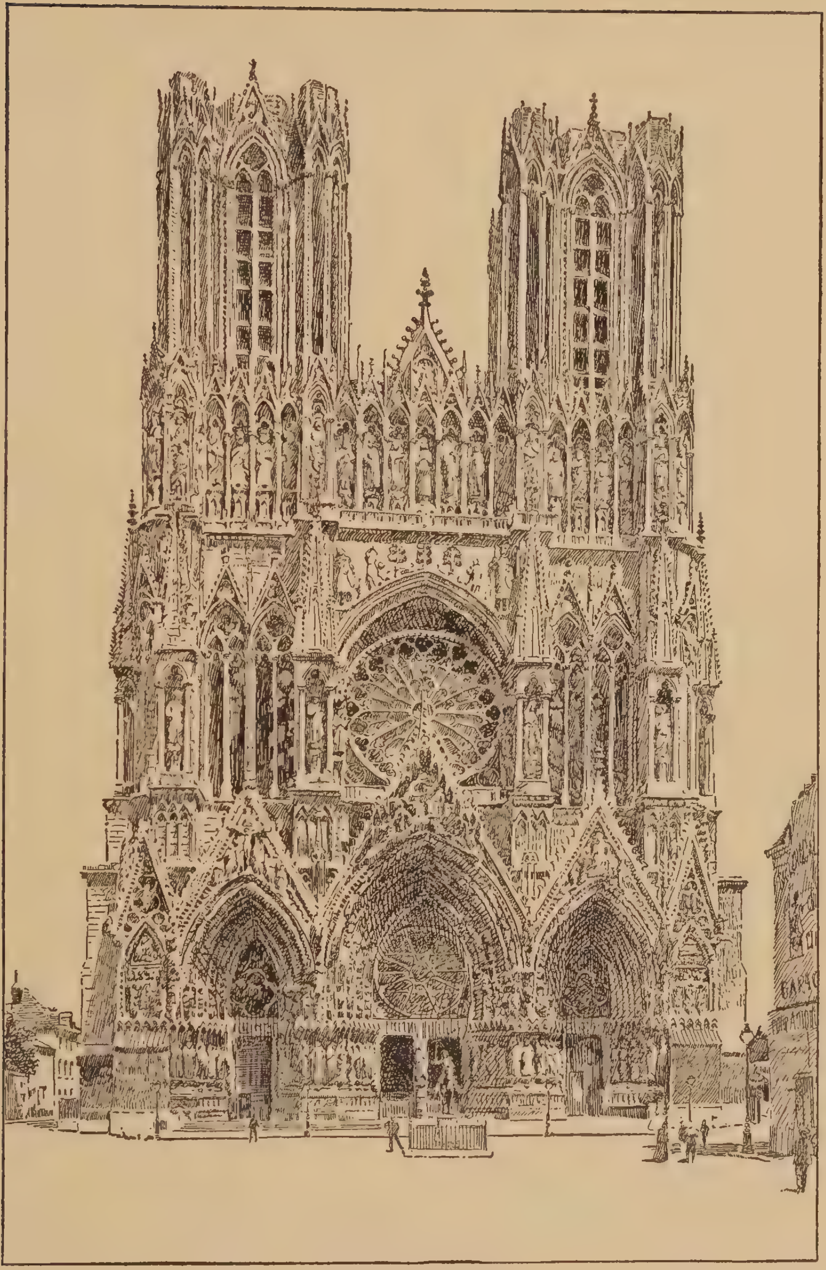
[1] tōōr-nā′.



Rheims Cathedral

"Loyal gentlemen of Tournay, I pray and require you that you make ready to come to the coronation of the gentle King at Rheims, where we shall soon arrive."

Everyone was ready to start on the coronation journey—everyone except the King himself. At last, in despair of rousing him from his indifference, Jeanne went out of the city and joined her generals in the camp. On June 27, with De Boussac, La Hire, De Rais, and other leaders, she set out with the advance guard of the army. There was nothing for the King to do but follow, as two days later he actually bestirred himself to do. He overtook the army on July 1, when it arrived before Auxerre.

Four months before Jeanne had seen Auxerre. Then, dressed in a shabby page's suit, riding a lean little horse, she had crept stealthily into the cathedral, had skulked outside the walls in the dark, wet, winter woods with a few faithful companions. Now the sun shone on hillsides covered with purpling grapes and yellow, ripening wheat, and she rode in white armor at the head of a splendid army. But now as then the city failed to welcome her. For Auxerre was loyal to the Duke of Burgundy.

The citizens, however, were as much afraid of the King's great army as they were of Duke Philip. So they tried to satisfy both sides. To the King's summons to receive him as their rightful lord, they answered by requesting him to pass by outside their walls. In return for this favor they offered to pay two thousand crowns and supply provisions for the troops. The soldiers would have liked to storm the walls and plunder the city, but the King preferred to gain his ends by peaceful means when it was possible. So, after three days in camp outside Auxerre, they passed on to St. Florentin,[1] which received them hospitably.

The next important place to be approached was Troyes,[2] a city which lived by manufacturing cloth. Hated by the French as the scene of the disgraceful treaty that betrayed France to England, it depended for its livelihood on the English and Burgundians, who in return for its obedience allowed its goods to reach the necessary markets. It did not dare offend these protectors, but it had only five or six hundred soldiers to defend its walls, and it wondered how to withstand so large an army.

There was in Troyes at this time a very strange person, a monk named Brother Richard, who went about the country preaching and who had great power over his listeners. When the army was within four miles of the city, this monk set out to see Jeanne, to find out whether or not she was a witch. In fear and trembling he approached her, making the sign of the cross and sprinkling holy water before him.

Jeanne saw at once that the good monk thought her a witch or a demon. She could not help being amused at sight of him, with his brown robe and his frightened face.

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[1] sȧṅ flō-rȧṅ-tăṅ′.

[2] troi.

"Come boldly," she called to him, laughing. "I will not fly away."

When Brother Richard saw that she was not driven away by the sign of the cross or the holy water, he at once concluded that all her claims were true and that she came from God. He had supposed her a demon; after he had talked to her for a little while he changed his mind, went to the other extreme, and was sure she was an angel.

By his hand Jeanne sent a letter to the citizens of Troyes, stating her mission from the King of Heaven, urging them to surrender to their rightful king, Charles, and threatening vengeance if they did not.

Soon after the monk's departure, the army advanced and stopped under the walls of the city. The King then sent a herald with a letter of his own, asking surrender and offering the citizens forgiveness for all past disloyalty.

This letter the chief men of Troyes discussed respectfully. The Maid's letter they laughed at, and threw into the fire unanswered. "It has neither rime nor reason," they jeered. "It is only nonsense."

Then in haste they wrote to Rheims for aid in resistance, saying that they would never yield to the Maid, whom they called a fool possessed by the devil. Meantime they replied to the King that they had made a pledge to the Duke of Burgundy never to admit into the city a larger number of troops than they had soldiers of their own. They begged the King, therefore, to excuse them and to press them no further.

So there seemed nothing to do but to take the town by storm, to pass around it and proceed to Rheims, or to return to Gien. Either plan was bad, for the army was very hungry. The soldiers had not even bread to eat, but were plucking the heads of wheat in the fields and rubbing out the kernels between their hands. The King and his council debated for hours what to do. The place seemed too well defended to be taken by storm without cannon. They could not maintain a long siege without food, nor could they march on without obtaining fresh supplies. Yet it was too humiliating to turn back.

Finally one of the councilors, always favorable to Jeanne, proposed sending for her. "The King set out on this journey," said he, "not for any reason suggested by logic or common sense, but because the Maid urged him to go and be crowned, saying there would be little resistance on the way. We had faith then in her words. Perhaps now she can give better advice than has been given in this council. If she cannot, I will go with the majority, abandon my belief in her, and agree to lift the siege and go back where we came from."

When the Maid appeared, the Archbishop of

Rheims explained to her the perplexity of the council. Jeanne turned to the King.

"Shall I be believed," she asked, "in what I say?"

"That depends on what you say, Jeanne," answered Charles doubtfully.

"Gentle King of France," she cried, "this city is yours. If you will yet stay two or three days, it will submit to you, either through love or through force. Do not doubt it!"

Something about the way she spoke always made men believe her. They believed her now. They agreed to wait six days, if necessary, but no longer. As the council scattered, Jeanne sprang upon her horse and rode, lance in hand, straight toward the moat around the city. After her rode a crowd of knights, squires, and men-at-arms, who began to put the few guns in place before the northwest wall, and to build ramparts, using house doors, shutters, tables, whatever wood they could lay hands on. They piled up bundles of fagots for making a bridge across the moat.

Up and down Jeanne galloped, encouraging the men, working with them, giving orders like an experienced general. All night they toiled. As dawn kindled in the sky, the folk within the city could hear a girl's clear voice ring out in the cry, "To the assault!"

The threat of attack was enough for the citizens. In refusing free entrance to the King, they had done their duty by the Duke of Burgundy; he could not blame them for saving themselves and their homes from fire and sword. Early in the morning, as Jeanne stood, banner in hand, ready to lead the assault, the gate opened and a group of clergy and city officials appeared. They were seeking the King to plead with him for the town. It was the Burgundian soldiers, they said, who had prevented them from admitting their rightful sovereign.

The King received them graciously, and offered such fair terms to his disloyal subjects that they were impressed with his generosity. The surrender was soon arranged for, and a second letter was written to Rheims to tell its people of the change of plan, and to urge them to act likewise.

> "We do not regret our surrender," said the letter. "We are only sorry we did not make it sooner. King Charles is a wiser and more powerful prince than has for a long time appeared in the royal family of France."

Meantime Brother Richard was preaching in the public square. God, he told his hearers, favored the King.

"He is conducted to his coronation," the monk declared, "by a holy Maid who knows the secrets of God. If she wished, she could make all the King's soldiers fly over the wall on wings."

The people, eager to receive a king who came in such good company, threw up their caps and shouted: "Long live King Charles of France!"

Early the next morning, July 10, the Maid entered the city, and posted in the streets through which the King would ride a double line of French archers. As the army approached one gate, the Burgundian soldiers marched out at another, having been permitted to leave with their property. Now their property included some French prisoners held for ransom. The Maid saw them being led away, stretching out pitiful hands to their friends, and her kind heart was touched. She ran to the commander of the Burgundians, Lord Rochefort.[1]

"Let our people go!" she demanded.

But Rochefort did not see it as she did. He held to the terms of the treaty. A soldier had a right to his prisoner or the money for his prisoner. Meantime the captives fell on their knees to the Maid, begging to be saved.

"In God's name!" she cried indignantly, "they shall not go!"

By this time the soldiers on both sides were interested and amused. The King rode up smiling. To settle the matter peaceably, he paid the ransom for the prisoners, a silver franc for each man, while the Burgundians praised him for his courtesy.

And now Charles made his triumphal entry into the first recovered town of his lost realm. He was dressed in festal array, splendid in velvet, gold, and jewels. Beside him on either hand rode the Maid and

[1] rōsh-fôr′.

the Duke of Alençon, and after him came all his knights. All the bells rang; people lighted bonfires and danced around them; Brother Richard preached; the children cried, "Noël!"

Only one important town lay between Troyes and Rheims. Two days after leaving Troyes, the King's army rode unopposed into Châlons[1]; the keys of the city had been presented by the Lord Bishop. At Châlons Jeanne was for a time less interested in the King and his conquests than in a group of much humbler folk; for there, among the crowd lining the streets to watch her pass, she spied some friends from Domremy—her godfather, Jean Morel, her friend, Gerardin d'Epinal, and some others.

As soon as the triumphal procession was over, she hastened to their inn to seek them out.

"What brings you here?" she asked, laughing and crying all at once, clasping the hand of first one and then another.

"What should?" inquired Morel. "What but to see our Maid?"

"All that way you came? Oh, you are good! You are like a breath of the river and the hills. And how are my parents, and Hauviette, and all the rest?"

Then tongues flew fast, until Jeanne had to return to her duties. In parting, she gave Morel the old red homespun dress that she had worn when she went to Vaucouleurs, kept carefully till now for sentiment.

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[1] shăl-ŏn′.

"Take it to my mother," she said. "She will like to have it, perhaps, to remind her of me."

"She needs no reminding," answered Morel. "But I wish she could see how fine you are," he added, looking at her furred cloak admiringly.

"I am the same Jeannette, for all this," she said. "I will be back again to spin in my mother's house."

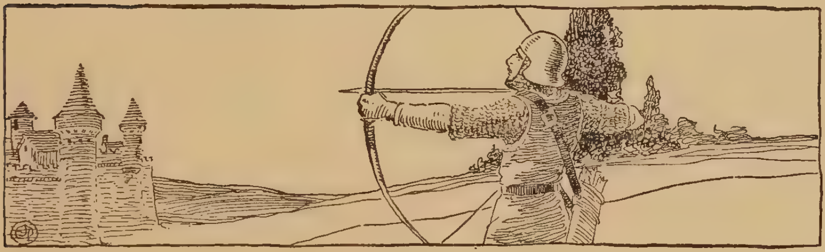
"Are you not ever afraid of the future?" asked D'Epinal, who, peasant though he was, had heard of the ways of kings and courts.

"I fear only treachery," she answered gravely.

It was the first hint she had given that she was learning the lesson of distrust. Four months had taught her something about courtiers and their promises. She had begun to know and fear La Trémouille, though she still trusted her king.

In two more days the journey was over. On Saturday, July 16, the army encamped at a village a few miles from Rheims, where the king lodged in a castle built two hundred years before as a summer palace for the archbishop. Here he received the gentlemen who came from Rheims to offer the submission of that city. They had made some show of trying to get aid from the Duke of Burgundy; but had decided that discretion, where so large an army was concerned, was the better part of valor.

From the castle windows Jeanne could see the massive towers of the great cathedral. Her heart thrilled; not at their beauty, though all the world has thrilled at that, and will for centuries more; but at their meaning. Those towers marked the goal of all her striving. Tomorrow her king would be crowned!



CHAPTER XIX

THE CORONATION

WHILE the king was receiving the submission of the gentlemen of Rheims, Regnault de Chartres had gone to take possession of the archbishop's throne. Although he had been chosen for this high position some time before, he had never been able to enter the city. English and Burgundian power had kept him from taking up the duties and dignities of his office. His first act as archbishop was to be the greatest of a churchman's life—the crowning of a king.

At evening the King, too, entered the city, Jeanne riding beside him over the lowered drawbridge. As usual, great crowds of shouting people filled the streets to see her pass. "Noël! Noël!" they cried, as the Archbishop and all the city officials rode out in splendid procession, with banners spread, to meet the King and the Maid and escort them to the Archbishop's palace.

It was the custom that the coronation should take place on Sunday. So it was a busy Saturday night for the people of Rheims. All night they worked to make everything ready for the morrow. Tapestries were hung from windows and balconies;

banners and garlands decked the streets where the procession would pass. The clergy of the cathedral prepared for their part in the great ceremony.

But alas! for the splendid coronation robes worn by Charles VII's ancestors; and alas! for the crown and scepter of St. Louis and the sword of Charlemagne. The crown, with its rubies, sapphires, and emeralds and its four golden lilies, was in the hands of the English and had been placed upon the head of their little king. The famous sword lay in its sheath of purple velvet at the abbey of St. Denis,[1] near Paris, where Burgundian priests guarded it and the other emblems of French royalty. Jeanne's Dauphin must be content with a crown and a robe chosen from the ones kept in the treasury of Rheims cathedral.

But at least the English had not laid hands upon the holy oil sent from heaven for the anointing of King Clovis, about which Jeanne's mother had told her children long ago.[2] Early on Sunday morning the Archbishop and the clergy of the cathedral, all in the splendid robes of a festival day, proceeded under escort of four high noblemen to the abbey of St. Remy to receive the crystal vial of oil. It was carefully kept in the saint's shrine behind the high altar in the abbey church.

The abbot, in his priestly robes, carried the vial to the portal of the church, where the Archbishop

[1] sȧṅ dĕn-ē′.

[2] See page 11.

received it. The four noblemen vowed to escort the treasure safely and to bring it back unharmed. Then the grand procession moved back to the cathedral, entered the high portal and passed down the nave, the four knights still mounted, each bearing the banner of his house. At the chancel steps the Archbishop turned and dismissed the guard, who retired down the aisle, making their steeds go backwards so that their faces might be always toward the altar.

The Archbishop, in his rich crimson robe, with mitre on head and cross in hand, waited before the altar. It was nine o'clock. Soon hundreds of silver trumpets blew, and the King was coming! He had made his way on horseback through streets packed with cheering people in holiday costume, past windows where handkerchiefs waved and flags fluttered, to the cathedral door. Now, wearing the royal robe of blue with golden lilies, he moved down the long aisle, followed by six great lords, among them La Trémouille and the Duke of Alençon, to represent the nobility of France, and six bishops and archbishops to represent the clergy. Walking alone came the Sire d'Albret,[1] bearing the sword of state, as substitute for the banished Lord High Constable.

The victorious generals of the army followed, with Jeanne probably at their head. But she alone, after the nobles, passed up into the chancel with her attendants and stood near the high altar.

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[1] dăl-brā'.

The service that preceded the coronation was long, splendid, and solemn, with prayers and anthems and sermons and the music of the pealing organ soaring high into the vaulted roof. Finally, standing before the altar, Charles VII took oath to preserve the privileges of the church; to guard his people from oppression and not to overtax them; and to govern with justice and mercy. Then the Duke of Alençon knighted his cousin, and the Archbishop poured upon his head the holy oil. The onlookers, trembling with joy, cried out "Noël!" and the silver trumpets blew. At last the crown, taken from the altar, was placed upon the King's head, and the twelve lords, standing in a circle around him, vowed to maintain it there.

When all the ceremony was finished, it was two o'clock.

Throughout these five hours, the happiest of her life, Jeanne had been standing near the King. No record tells of what she wore; but imagination may picture her still in the shining armor, with a silken tunic over it, perhaps of white with golden lilies, as befitted the Maid who had saved France. Behind her stood her page, De Conte, and her devoted follower, Brother Richard, the two holding her banner for her by turns and making a strange contrast of brown-garbed monk and gayly dressed courtier.

At the end of the ceremony, Jeanne's great moment came. As the crowned King turned from the altar, she knelt before him and embraced his knees.

"Gentle King," she said, weeping with joy, "the pleasure of God is done, who willed that I raise the siege of Orléans and bring you to this city of Rheims to receive your consecration, showing that you are the true king to whom the realm of France ought to belong."

No one knows what was the King's reply, or whether he made any; but it is easy to believe the record of an eyewitness which says that all the people wept with the Maid, seeing her so fair and young and hearing her sweet and thrilling voice.

In the afternoon sunshine, Charles VII rode off for his triumphal course through the streets of Rheims. Jeanne was joined by the two knights whose devotion in the early days had been the first step toward this climax. Leaving the cathedral with her little group of faithful friends, she met the crowning happiness of her day. Before the portal, dressed in their Sunday best, turning their caps awkwardly in work-worn hands and beaming with smiles, stood Jacques d'Arc and Uncle Lassois.

"My father!" cried Jeanne, forgetting dignity and splendor, forgetting all but the sight of that beloved face. She was no longer a warrior maid; she was a little peasant girl who half a year before had displeased her father, and who now was sure of his forgiveness. Straight to his arms she ran, while he told her all his pride and joy in this great day.

"And now, soon," she assured him at last, "I shall be home again to see my friends. Tell my mother that I come soon. A few more days will see the king in Paris. Then the English will go back to their own land, and I shall come home."

"God grant it, my daughter."

"And O, Lassois, do you remember how we went to Vaucouleurs? So frightened as you were!"

"Could I forget?" asked the stout countryman, beaming with pride.

"You were the first to believe in me," said Jeanne. "You brought me here!" Then, seeing that Lassois was embarrassed before the fine gentlemen who accompanied her, she turned to them with courtly grace. "He was first, and you were next," she said to De Metz and Poulengy. "You, too, brought me here, and so you will go with me to bring my father and my uncle to the King."

No record remains of that interview when, moving in what must have seemed to them like a fairy tale, the two Domremy peasants knelt before their king. But it is pleasant to imagine Jeanne's honest pride in her own people, and the graciousness of Charles, who, though weak, was always courteous. The King gave Jeanne's father a purse of gold; and next day the city council paid all his expenses at the inn and gave him and Lassois each a horse to ride home on.

Jacques d'Arc traveled homeward joyously. He would be a great man in the village now, with all he had to tell. And his daughter had saved France, and she was coming back to him.

But the honest farmer carried home to Domremy something more precious than either gold or steed. It was an official paper, safely stowed in his pouch.

The day after the coronation the King asked Jeanne what reward she would have from France.

"I came commanded by God," she answered, a little hurt that anyone would think she wished to be paid. "I seek no wage."

"Not a wage, my child," urged Charles. "Something to make you remember that France thanks you."

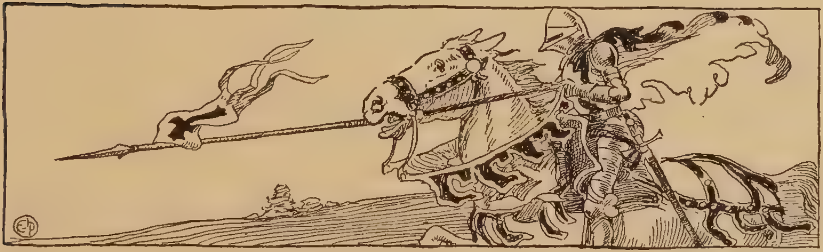
She was silent a moment. "One thing, then, I will ask," she said. "Give me your promise that my village, Domremy, and its neighbor, Greux, shall be forever free from taxation."

The King promised; and the paper in Jacques d'Arc's pouch was the official order freeing his village from its heavy burden of taxes.

Charles's promise could not last forever, but it lasted as long as there were kings of his line in France. For until the Revolution, almost four hundred years later, swept kings and their promises away, the tax lists of Bar bore the entry, on the page containing the names of Domremy and Greux:

NOTHING—FOR THE SAKE OF THE MAID

It was all that Jeanne asked of France; it was all that France gave her.



CHAPTER XX

THE POLITICIANS INTERFERE

NOW that Charles VII was truly King of France, his next step was evidently to take possession of his capital city, Paris. Jeanne and the French generals expected him to do so; the English and Burgundians expected it and feared it. The new army for which the Duke of Bedford had sent to England was on the way; but at the time of the coronation it had not yet landed in France. So Paris was badly defended and quite at the mercy of the eager French army, if it marched immediately, so as to arrive before the fresh English forces.

But the idea of taking Paris did not suit La Trémouille and the Archbishop at all. A weak, helpless king was more to their liking than a strong, independent one. So they set about contriving a delay which would give the English time to strengthen Paris. They did so in a fashion most likely to appeal to Charles; they tried to bring about a truce between him and his cousin, Duke Philip of Burgundy. Charles so thoroughly disliked fighting that if he thought he could win the same results by peaceful means he would always choose to do so. To win their strongest ally away from the English would be as good as to conquer them in battle.

Jeanne herself wanted peace with Duke Philip, but she wanted it by his submission to Charles as his king. She had written to him from Gien, inviting him to the coronation, but her letter had received no answer. On the day of the coronation she wrote again, asking him no longer to "make war against the holy kingdom of France." Burgundy paid no attention to this letter, either. But at the very time when she wrote it, his envoys were arriving at Rheims, bringing to La Trémouille and the Archbishop proposals for a secret treaty.

For Duke Philip was clever and crafty, a man who would run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. He did not really want either the English Henry VI or the French Charles VII to be entirely victorious. A king who ruled all France would be Burgundy's overlord; and what the Duke really wanted was to be king himself of an independent state with no master over him. He wished to make use of both sides to help this purpose. So on July 15 he had, in Paris, renewed his promises of help and friendship to the Duke of Bedford; and on July 16, from Laon,[1] sent messengers offering friendship to Charles.

For four days the Burgundians discussed matters with the King and his council. No final peace was arranged, but the unwarlike Charles was persuaded that after awhile, if he waited, Paris would be yielded to him peacefully, without a battle. So a truce of fifteen days was agreed upon, and the King promised to send his envoys to Duke Philip in the city of Arras,[1] early in August. Then the messengers departed.

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[1] läṅ.

After they had gone, Charles began leisurely to move toward Paris. His first stop was at a small fortified town called Vailly,[2] in the valley of the Aisne[3] River, a few miles from the cities of Laon and Soissons.[4] Both places immediately sent him their keys, and on July 23 he entered Soissons unresisted, while his army camped outside.

There he stayed five days. During these five days, while the flattered King enjoyed the praises of the loyal citizens, five thousand English soldiers marched into Paris. The great opportunity was gone.

But La Trémouille did not let Charles think so. Every day came messengers from one or another important city in the region between Paris and Rheims, which, overawed by the great army, had just declared its loyalty to the King. It was only a matter of time, said the crafty politician, before Paris would do likewise. Meanwhile, it would be wise to show the royal pleasure at the submission of these good cities. So the royal progress turned southward, the next stop being Château-Thierry,[5] on the Marne.

[1] ȧ-rä′. [2] vā′yē. [3] ān. [4] swä-sōn′. [5] shȧ-tō tyā-rē′.

So far, so good. The march until now had been in the general direction of Paris. But when the army moved southward again, and the King entered the welcoming gates of Provins,[1] Jeanne and her generals began to be alarmed.

"But this is the road to the Loire!" they muttered to one another. "Do we then go back to Gien to disband?"

The people of Rheims, too, became frightened. Was the King deserting them? If so, they would surely suffer dreadful punishment from the Duke of Burgundy for having allowed Charles to enter and be crowned.

Discouraged herself, rebelling against the delay, Jeanne tried to comfort these good people who for three happy days had been kind to her. She wrote to them on August 15:

> "I promise you that I will not desert you as long as I live. It is true that the King has made a truce of fifteen days with the Duke of Burgundy, at the end of which the Duke will deliver Paris to the King. . . . I do not like this truce, and I am not sure that I shall keep it. If I do, it will be only to save the honor of the King. At all events, I will keep the army in good condition, so that it will be ready at the end of fifteen days, in case they do not make peace. . . . Guard your city well for the King, and let me know if any oppressor does you harm."

Jeanne did not realize, when she made this promise, how completely she and the King and France itself were in the control of a few dishonest, selfish, and powerful men. What she and the King would do would be as La Trémouille decided. But that, happily, she did not know as yet.

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[1] prō-văṅ′.

It seems probable that Charles and his counselors had really decided to play the coward and retreat across the Loire, for from Provins they started southwestward, intending to cross the Seine by the bridge at Bray. But before they reached there a force of English soldiers had seized the city, and the retreat of the royal army was cut off. Turning back, they directed their way at last toward Paris.

La Trémouille was probably furious at this movement, but the hungry, discouraged army, weary of marching up and down to no purpose, was delighted. As for Jeanne and her little group of chivalrous noblemen, eager for the destruction of English power, they were in raptures. They rejoiced even at a repulse by the English, since it prevented a disgraceful retreat.

But it was too late to rejoice. The chance to take Paris easily was gone, if they had known it.

However, the march back toward Paris, which took them finally to Crepy,[1] seemed like a triumphal procession. Everywhere the people ran to meet them, especially the poor, shouting welcome, singing hymns of joy, weeping for gladness. One day, as she rode between the Archbishop and Dunois, Jeanne burst out:

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[1] krā-pē′.

"What good folk they are! I have never seen people so glad at the coming of the King." Then, with a sigh, she added, "I would to God that when I die I might be so happy as to be buried in this soil!"

"Jeanne," asked the Archbishop, "where do you hope to die?" He spoke curiously; many people thought superstitiously that Jeanne could foretell the future.

"Wherever it shall please God," she answered reverently. "I know no more than you the time or the place. But I wish it might please God that now I should lay down my armor and go to serve my father and my mother, keeping the sheep with my brothers."

How tired the words sounded! And yet Jeanne had not a spirit to be worn out by exertion. She was active, strong, and energetic. It is discouragement that tires the spirit—the feeling that all one does is done against the will of others; or, worse, that all one does is done in vain.

But although Jeanne had begun to see that her King was a poor weakling, and that his counselors were ready to trick and betray her for their own ends, she was no coward, to leave a task half done. So she rode on with the King's army to Crepy, and finally, on Saturday, August 13, encamped with them in the open fields near Dammartin.[1]

By this time Charles knew that the truce would not end in the peaceful surrender of Paris, but in further warfare. Bedford's fresh army was in the field, ready to defend the capital. The King had received a letter from Bedford, calling on Charles to meet him to discuss terms of peace. This letter was full of insults both for the King and the Maid.

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[1] dă-mär-tăṅ′.

> "You mislead the ignorant people," wrote Bedford, "and you have called to your aid folk who deal in magic—an infamous woman, dressed as a man and loose in conduct; and a troublesome monk who has been untrue to his vows."

He alluded, of course, to Brother Richard. Probably Bedford sincerely believed that Jeanne was all he called her, for the English had made her, in their minds, into a frightful creature before whom the bravest men turned pale.

The Maid, whom the enemy so feared, climbed, that evening at sunset, to the hills beside the camp. She could see the steep bluff of Montmartre[1] with its windmills, and the light mists, rising from the Seine, that hung over the great city of Paris. Soon there would be fighting again—clash of arms and smell of powder and flight of arrows, battle cries and floating banners as the men-at-arms charged. She was glad. Better the open struggle, even with wounds and death at the end, than a battle in the dark with the crooked minds of crafty men.

"It is better to die than to be betrayed," she thought. And it did not occur to her that both disasters might happen.

[1] môṅ-mär'tr.

CHAPTER XXI

BEFORE PARIS—AND AFTER

NEXT day, Sunday, the English army coming from Paris and the French army marching toward Paris found themselves facing each other, along a little stream, about five miles southeast of the town of Senlis.[1] During that night the English were busy digging trenches and building a stockade of wagons and sharpened poles.

At dawn on Monday the French were astir. Their lines of horsemen, archers, and men-at-arms formed for battle, and advanced to a place only two bowshots from the English defenses. But the enemy would not come out as a body and fight in the open field. The day passed in skirmishings between small parties of horse and foot in the space between the hostile armies.

A few French would ride forward, calling their taunting challenge; a few English would rush out to fight them. To the main body of men watching on each side it seemed almost like a tournament. The King looked on from a safe place, and thrilled at the courage and skill of his followers. The most venturesome party, which advanced up to the very line of the English entrenchments, was that in which La Hire, Dunois, and the Maid were leaders.

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[1] sȧṅ′lē.

But nothing came of all these gallant single combats. The uncertainties of the last few days had robbed Jeanne of some of her valiant spirit. She did not rally her men with her stirring war cry, nor ride rashly forward to take the English line by storm. Instead, she let others take the lead; and as the day waned she withdrew into camp like the rest, while in the darkness the English slipped quietly away and took the road to Paris.

However dissatisfied the King's generals and his army may have been with this state of affairs, Charles himself was happy. A very little fighting was enough for him. Every day more of his lost towns declared themselves on his side. Senlis did so; Beauvais[1] did so, much to the anger of its bishop, Pierre Cauchon[2]; and finally Compiègne[3] did so. This last was a strong city, and the King at once turned northward and took up his residence there.

He was well pleased at all that had been accomplished. He was tired of warfare; the arrangements for the truce were going on well; and he hoped that now Jeanne and Alençon would be contented to rest for a while, and let La Trémouille and the Archbishop settle matters.

So the King's messengers went to Duke Philip in Arras, and the Duke's messengers came to the King

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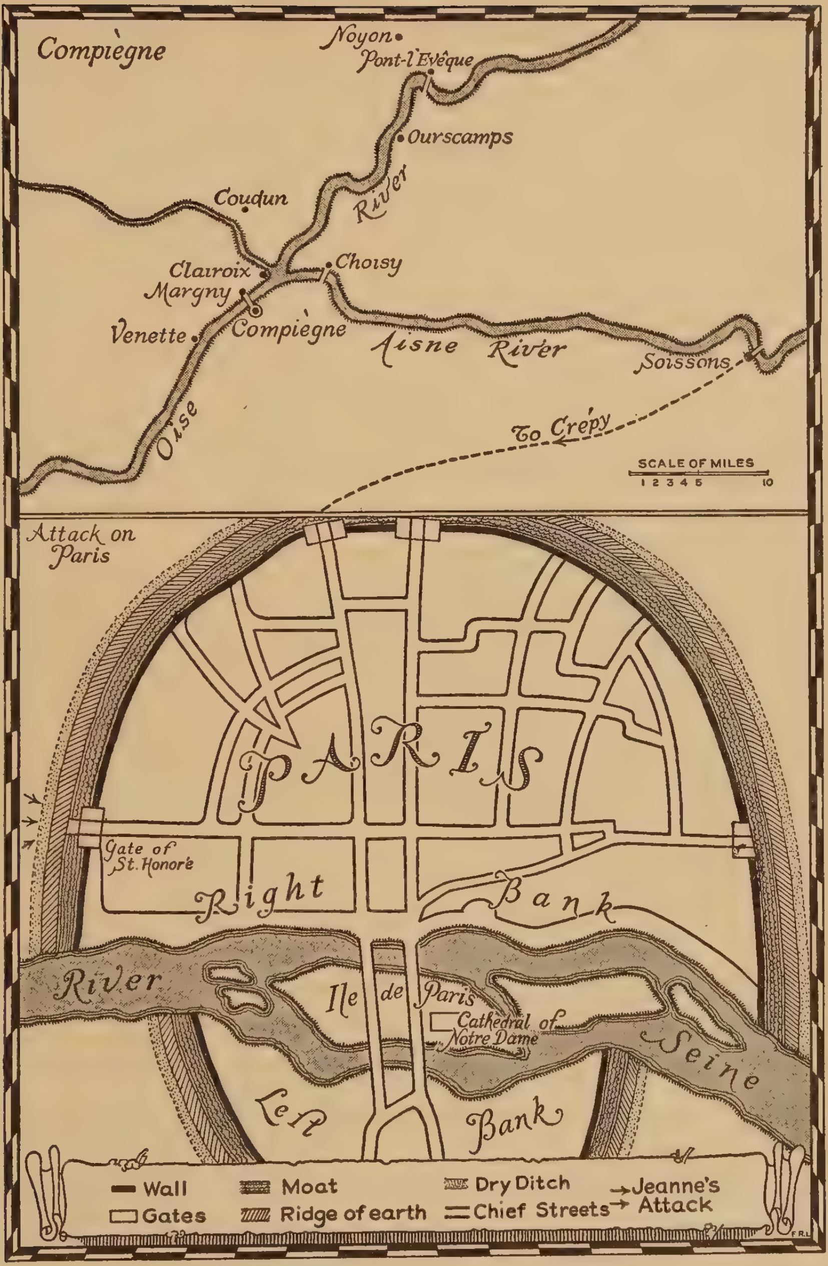
[1] bō-vā'. [2] kō-shŏṅ'. [3] kôṁ-pyĕṅ'.


Compiègne
Noyon
Pont-l'Evêque
Ourscamps
Coudun
River
Clairoix
Choisy
Margny
Venette
Compiègne
Aisne River
Soissons
Oise
To Crépy
SCALE OF MILES
1 2 3 4 5 10
Attack on Paris
PARIS
Gate of St. Honoré
Right Bank
River
Ile de Paris
Cathedral of Notre Dame
Seine
Left Bank
Wall
Gates
Moat
Ridge of earth
Dry Ditch
Chief Streets
Jeanne's Attack
F.R.L.

Paris at the time of Jeanne's attack

in Compiègne, and the upshot of their journeyings was a truce with Burgundy, signed August 28, to last until Christmas. Peace was to be kept till then in all France north of the Seine, not, however, including Paris. The Duke reserved the right to defend that city, for the French made no promise in the treaty that it would not be attacked. Evidently it seemed useless to try to prevent Jeanne and the party that favored war from attempting to take the capital; and perhaps, too, even La Trémouille thought it unwise to announce openly that the plan to recover it had been given up.

But five days before this truce was signed, Jeanne had grown weary of idleness in Compiègne. She was distressed, too, about her soldiers, who were tired and discouraged with marching about and getting nowhere. So she and Alençon took things into their own hands. They made ready their fine body of troops, and in three days, on August 26, were in camp at St. Denis, five miles from Paris.

Jeanne was glad to see the famous city, where the kings of France were buried, and where the royal crown and sword and banner were kept in the abbey. Weeks before, most of the people had fled to Paris, so that only a few poor peasant families and the monks in the abbey remained there. The poor folk welcomed her, the monks showed her their treasured relics, and she acted as godmother for two little babies at their christening.

Meanwhile, the soldiers enjoyed themselves on skirmishing parties in the country toward Paris, even in that war-torn region finding booty that they could carry away. Jeanne and Alençon studied the walls and gates of the city, riding as near as they dared. No attack could be made, however, until the King joined them. He must be present to enter his capital as victor at the head of his army. Perhaps the gates would open to him without a battle.

At last, when the Burgundian truce was signed. Charles did move feebly as far as Senlis. Encouraged, Alençon went in person to urge him to come farther, to St. Denis. He promised, but did not stir until Alençon went the second time. Finally, on September 7, the King was at last reunited with his army. The soldiers rejoiced, saying to each other:

"She will put the King inside Paris if he will let her."

What was the state of affairs in Paris? Although many people there favored the King, feeling was kindest toward Duke Philip of Burgundy, a rich, splendid, handsome lord in contrast with a poor, wretched, and homely one. Neither party wasted much love on the English. The Duke of Bedford, feeling that the city would make a better resistance under Burgundian leaders than under English ones, had gone away into Normandy, leaving several Burgundian generals in command. Two thousand soldiers were there, besides the Parisian militia.

Since the French had arrived at St. Denis, no one had gone out of the city to buy provisions or to cut the harvest, and food was scarce and dear. The cannon had been placed upon the walls and the defences strengthened, and thousands of bullets and cannon balls were being made. Masses were said in the cathedral of Notre Dame[1] for the public safety. Stories of the Maid and her magic power ran from street to street. So, in the midst of growing uneasiness, arrived the night of September 7.

Yet the Parisians went to sleep peacefully that night, for the next day was a holy day, kept throughout France in honor of the Virgin Mary. Surely, thought the citizens, no Christian army will attack the city on so ancient and sacred a festival. In the morning they flocked to their churches. But at eleven o'clock, just at the hour of high mass, they heard outside the walls to the west, near the gate of St. Honoré,[2] the noise of an arriving army. Truly enough, ten thousand men, with all the noblest generals of France, were there beneath the wall, ready to begin the attack. With them they had plenty of guns and ammunition, wagon loads of wood with which to bridge the moat, and seven hundred scaling ladders.

Best of all, the unconquered Maid was there, as sure of entering Paris that day as of going to heaven after death. Once again she was brave and cheerful,

[1] nō′tr dȧm′.

[2] sȧṅt ŏn-ō-rā′.

encouraging her men, as four months before at Orléans.

The obstacles to be overcome by the army were as follows: First, a narrow, dry ditch, about sixteen feet deep; then a shelving ridge of earth; then a second ditch, a hundred feet wide, very deep, and full of water, from which rose the wall; next, before the gate, a boulevard across the moat, protected by barriers of wood, like that at the Tourelles[1]; and last, a castle protecting the gate. Banners floated on the walls; especially noticeable was a great white flag with a red St. Andrew's cross, the standard of the Burgundians.

The army, sheltered from the gunfire by a little hill, set up their cannon, while an advance party made for the gate with their storming materials. At their head rode Jeanne. They dismounted at the dry ditch, and crossed it without trouble; but then they found themselves on the ridge of earth, exposed to a shower of arrows from the walls.

Fearlessly Jeanne looked up, a slender, shining figure.

"Yield the city to the King of France!" she called to the men on the walls.

No answer came except from bowmen and gunners. As the firing went on, one company of the French took possession of the boulevard. But when Jeanne tested with her lance the depth of the water in the moat, she found it too deep to cross. To take the city they must scale the wall, and, to scale the wall, they must cross the moat.

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[1] See page 115.

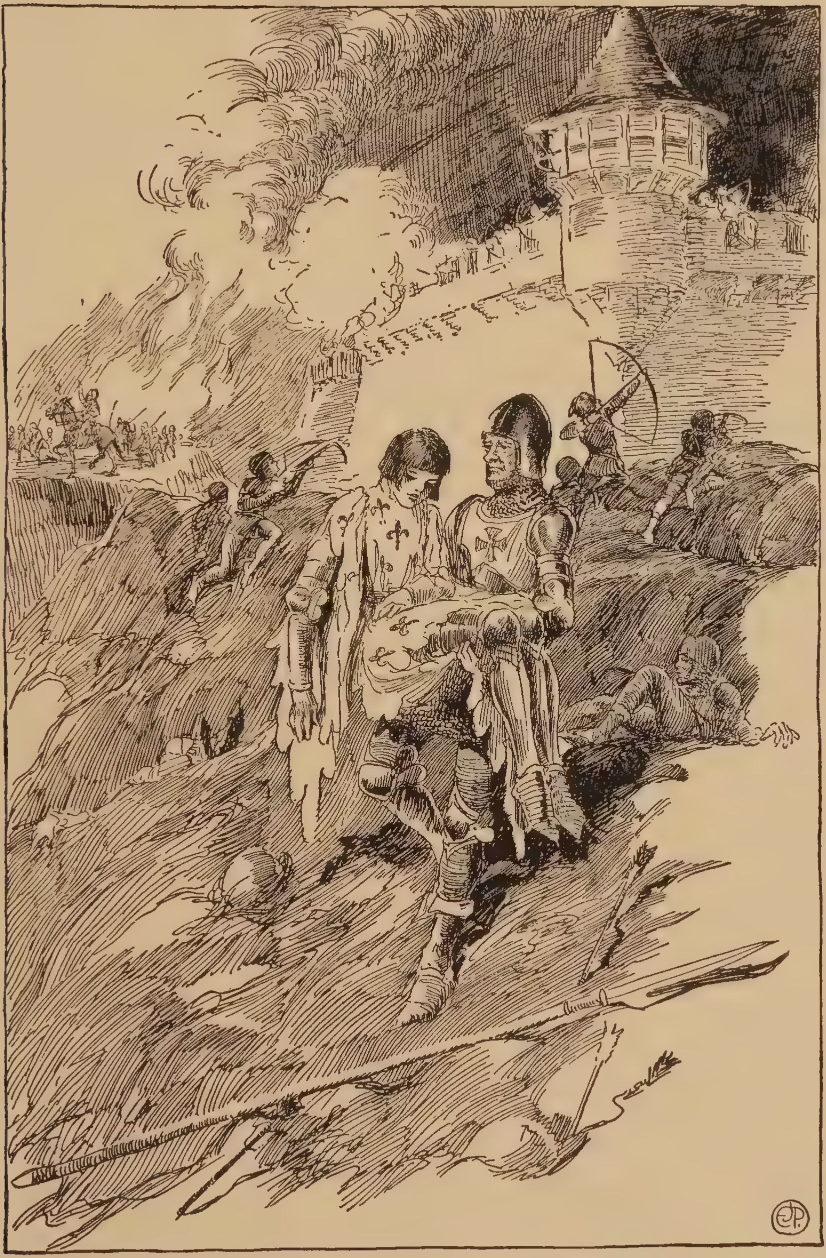
For hours the soldiers threw load after load of wood into the water, hoping to fill it enough for crossing. It was all in vain. The generals had neglected to bring with them the copper boats often used for crossing a moat. Probably they did not know they would be needed.

Jeanne would not give up. She ran along the ridge, testing the depth of the water here and there, hoping to find a shallow place that they could fill.

The firing from the walls became more savage as the afternoon waned. The citizens, who at the first alarm had run to and fro in terror, or locked themselves in their houses, fearing the sacking of the city by the dreaded Armagnac soldiers, had now recovered their senses and hurried to the defense. Arrows and bullets were accompanied as they fell with curses and abuse. The unprotected French between the two moats suffered severely. At last Jeanne's standard bearer was shot through the head, and a moment after she too fell, her thigh pierced with an arrow.

She was up again in a moment. Soldiers helped her to a sheltered place just behind the top of the ridge, and she lay there, still urging her men onward.

"Approach the walls!" she cried. "The place will be taken!"



Old Sire de Gaucourt carried Jeanne away by force

Night fell; still the moat was uncrossed; still the fight went on. Toward ten o'clock the generals, seeing that the soldiers were weary and that success was impossible, ordered a retreat. Jeanne, still lying in her sheltered position, would not go. At last the old Sire de Gaucourt, her friend of Orléans days, seized her and carried her away by force. Wounded, she could not struggle against him, though she still cried out, as he set her on her horse:

"The place would have been taken! it would have been taken!"

The departure of the French army from before Paris was more a flight than a retreat. They expected to be pursued. They left all their siege machinery before the walls, using the wagons to carry the wounded; they burned their baggage. And so they brought the Maid to camp at La Chapelle. Now that the fight was over, she realized how painful was her wounded limb.

But she was not yet beaten. Early next morning she called upon the Duke of Alençon to sound the signal to mount and ride.

"Let us return to the assault," she cried, "and not come back until the city is taken."

The Duke was willing. But before the march could start, a message came from the King ordering the generals to return to St. Denis, and to bring the Maid with them. There was nothing to do but obey. The party that favored peace, especially La Trémouille, had completely won over the King in the absence of his warriors. He did not give up hope of Paris, but he was resolved to gain it peacefully, without more fighting.

But Alençon was not yet ready to retire from the field. A few days before he had had a bridge built across the Seine above Paris. If the army crossed it, they could march around the city and attack it from the south. At dawn of the next day the young Duke and the Maid rode with a few knights to the edge of the river where the bridge had been. To their horror, no bridge was there. It had been destroyed during the night. This time the King had been too quick for them.

Like all weak people, when Charles once made up his mind he was stubborn. His determination had been strengthened by another messenger from Duke Philip, who asked him to stop fighting and to include Paris in the boundaries covered by the truce. Charles had agreed to this. La Trémouille and the Archbishop had accomplished all that they wished. The King could go back to his idle life in the pleasant castles on the Loire. The order was given to march homeward on September 13.

Jeanne did not want to go; first, because her Voices told her to stay; second, because her courageous spirit hated to give up the battle unfinished. Her task of driving the English out of France was proving too hard, not because she lacked an army or ability to inspire it, but because she was blocked at every turn by the cowardice of the wretched King and the selfishness of his crafty counselors.

"If I were not wounded," she said to her friends among the soldiers, "I would not go one step."

Nevertheless, she was dragged unwillingly away, her Voices at last having given her permission to obey the King, since needs must.

On the sad day when the southerly march began, Jeanne took off the white armor that she loved so much and hung it, with a sword that she had captured before Paris, before the shrine of Our Lady in the church at St. Denis.

"Why did you do this, Jeanne?" someone asked her afterwards.

"It was an act of devotion," she replied. "It is the custom of soldiers, when they are wounded and escape, to make a thank-offering to the saints. I had been wounded at Paris, so I offered my armor at St. Denis."

Perhaps she felt, as she set out on the ride of defeat, that her fighting days were over. Yet that is not likely; for if she had not been hopeful that she might still help to drive out the English, she would have gone back to Domremy, leaving the miserable King to his petty quarreling and truce-making.

For a week the army dragged along the road toward the Loire—a gloomy, tired, disappointed army. They had marched away from Gien six weeks before with high hopes, soaring courage, and flaunting banners. Now the hopes were gone, the courage dead, and the banners drooped in the autumn dust and heat. At every crossroad little groups drifted away, seeking their homes. At Gien, the King disbanded those who were left of the men-at-arms, unpaid; each man went away to his own town or village or castle. The Duke of Alençon, angry and disappointed, said good-by forever to Jeanne as a comrade in arms, and departed to his estates.

"So," says an ancient writer, a friend of Alençon, "was broken the will of the Maid, and the army of the King."

CHAPTER XXII

SIX USELESS MONTHS

ON the wide stone window seat made by the thickness of the stone walls of her chamber, a girl sat on a bright, crisp day of October and looked out over the windy, autumn-colored landscape that stretched from the town of Bourges[1] to the Loire on the east and the Cher on the west. Although she was treated with great courtesy and kindness by a charming hostess, Jeanne felt as if she were in prison. Her life had lately been too full of excitement for her to be able to settle down to everyday things.

She was staying with the wife of the King's treasurer, a gentlewoman attached to Queen Marie's service. To this comfortable, wealthy home she had been brought from Selles, where the King had gone after the army disbanded at Gien. Jeanne had been in Bourges now almost three weeks, and was beginning to long for news of the King, the soldiers, the English, anything that belonged to her real life.

Yet she had enjoyed telling over to Demoiselle[2] Marguerite the experiences of the last six months. And she had been glad to be able to go to church every day again. Her hostess went with her, proud for everyone to see her famous guest; and she was a most satisfactory listener, never tired of hearing Jeanne tell of her battles and marches. She could not understand why the girl was not afraid in the assaults on walled cities.

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[1] bo͝orzh. [2] Title of a daughter of a noble house: dĕm-wä-zĕl′.

"If you were not afraid," she would insist, "it was because you knew that you would not be killed."

And Jeanne would answer, "I am no more sure of that than any other soldier."

Today, however, she was weary of living over great moments of the past; she wanted action in the present. The very clothes she wore, doublet and hose and surcoat, which she would not lay by, reminded her that her life belonged to camp and field, not to a safe fireside and a sheltered couch. She was gazing wistfully from the window when a knock came at the door, and Marguerite entered. She held a rosary in her hand.

"Here is another," she said smiling.

"Another? Who, then, this time?"

"It is the apothecary's daughter Marie, who brings her rosary and begs that you will touch it."

Every day such visitors came. All over France stories of the Maid had spread, until people everywhere believed that she could heal the sick, bring good fortune, work any miracle one wished, by her touch. Prayers on a rosary that Jeanne had touched would surely be answered. Little leaden medals with her image had been made, and thousands of people wore them as charms.

Jeanne found it very amusing to be considered so wonderful a person. She answered now, laughing:

"Touch it yourself, my friend. Your touch will do as much good as mine." Then, with a glance at the window, she added, "There is a poor cripple beside the gate. Ask Marie as she passes by to give him this coin."

"You are always generous," said the devoted Marguerite.

"No—oh, no. God sent me to console the poor and needy, and the King has given me money for this use."

There was the sound of a stir in the street below. Jeanne looked out.

"Oh," she cried, in the ringing tone that her last words had lacked, "it is my squire! He brings news!" Not waiting for the heavier steps of Marguerite, she dashed down the stairway to greet the Sire d'Aulon, who sat his horse at the gate. He could not dismount, for he had been wounded in the heel in the attack on Paris, and walked only on crutches.

"Sire Jean!" she cried, laughing and weeping at once, "what news of France? Do we ride to battle?"

"We ride, Jeanne, but not to battle. You ride with me to the King's castle at Mehun,[1] not far off, whither the court has just come. It is the King's favorite castle," he added.

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[1] mâ-ŭṅ'.

Jeanne's page soon had her belongings in readiness, her farewells were said, and the three set out westward.

"And what has happened to France while I have been away?" she asked anxiously.

"No good," said D'Aulon gloomily. "The nobles whom the King left in charge of his recovered cities have failed to keep order there. Clermont, chief in responsibility, has gone away to his own estates, and the people are revolting against Vendôme,[1] who succeeded him. The soldiers left to guard the region are beyond control, wandering about everywhere to burn and plunder."

"And all this has happened in four weeks?" asked Jeanne, amazed.

"All this and worse. Burgundian soldiers came and took St. Denis by storm, sacked the town, and captured your armor. They took it back to Paris for a trophy."

"The Maid's armor captured!" cried De Conte, horrified. "Then heaven has deserted France!"

"Not so, Louis," said Jeanne cheerfully. "It is only my armor they have captured, not myself." Then, smiling at his unhappy face, "Do not grieve. We shall get it back when we take Paris." She turned back to D'Aulon. "And what of the Duke of Burgundy, Sire Jean?"

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[1] väṅ-dōm′.

"He has persuaded our King to extend the truce till Easter."

Jeanne looked grave. "My year will be almost past at Easter.[1] But go on."

"And Bedford has made him ruler of Paris, and gone away and left him there. Yet at the same time Burgundy seeks to make peace with our King. Now that he has the city in his control, he will never give it back, peace or no peace."

"I fear Duke Philip seeks to keep friends with both sides, and so is friend to neither," said Jeanne wisely.

"Do not say such things where La Trémouille can hear you. He is well pleased with Duke Philip. And here is the castle," said D'Aulon, pointing to where the beautiful towers rose at the summit of a rocky hill.

The knights and ladies of the court made much of Jeanne when she arrived, but she grieved when she saw how the days passed in idle chatter and amusement. The King was no more brave, no more ambitious, no more energetic than when she first found him, the poor, frightened Dauphin, at Chinon. Alençon, who rebelled against idleness, wanted to ride with an army into Normandy, taking Jeanne with him, and conquer the English there. But La Trémouille persuaded the King to refuse. That crafty lord wanted to keep the Maid under his own control, otherwise there was no knowing what harm she might do to his plans.

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[1] See page 207.

But, as the days passed, even La Trémouille found it annoying to be followed about by an eager girl, always urging him or the King or the Archbishop or De Gaucourt to action, always begging for more battles. Heaped with luxuries and honors as she was, going with the King first to one castle, then to another, she did not know when she was well off. She could not be made content.

In order to provide her with something to do, La Trémouille planned a little campaign toward the east. Not far off, on the other side of the Loire, just on the edge of the Burgundian possessions, were two little towns that it would do no harm to let Jeanne try to take. If she failed, no great evil would result.

Jeanne was delighted. At the end of October she went back to Bourges, where a small army was assembling. She shared the command with the Sire d'Albret,[1] a half brother of La Trémouille, who probably had orders to watch her as well as assist her. Early in November they marched southward, and laid siege to St. Pierre-le-Moustier.[2]

After a few days of siege, the army made an assault, but was almost immediately driven back by the garrison of English and Burgundians. The Sire d'Aulon, limping along on his crutches after the retreating soldiers, looked back. To his horror, he saw Jeanne, a gallant figure, almost alone at the edge of the moat. Her standard bearer was with her, her two brothers, and the Sire de Metz—by all others she was deserted.

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[1] See page 170.

[2] săṅ pyār′lẽ-mo͞os-tyā′.

"She is lost!" cried D'Aulon. Seizing a horse from the nearest page, he climbed painfully into the saddle, and rode at full speed back toward the moat.

"What are you doing here alone?" he shouted to her. "Why did you not retreat with the rest of us?"

She lifted the front of her helmet and shouted back, "I am not alone! I have fifty thousand of my people with me, and I will not sir from this spot until I have taken the town."

"She has lost her wits!" thought D'Aulon in a panic. He did not understand that she was thinking of the thousands of people all over France who prayed for her victory.

"Come away from here!" he cried.

Instead of obeying, the Maid called in a ringing voice:

"Fagots and brush, everyone! We will bridge the moat!"

Her voice carried to the ranks of retreating soldiers, who had halted at a distance to wait for her. With one accord they rushed to do her bidding. The bridge was built and the town taken without much difficulty. It seemed a miracle.

Puzzled, the Sire d'Aulon sat upon his horse and looked on. "Were they fifty thousand spirits that she called to help her?" he wondered. "Were there legions of angels helping to scale the walls?"

The other town against which Jeanne was sent was harder to capture. This was La Charité,[1] farther down the river and very well defended and fortified. Winter had begun. The army had splendid officers, but it was small and the ammunition scanty. The men were badly fed, badly clothed, and badly paid. The King offered no help at all; but by writing to neighboring towns Jeanne obtained a few supplies. Orléans, as usual, was generous to its Maid; the citizens sent food, ammunition, all the guns they had brought back from Gien, and a company of the city troops, with gunners, carpenters, masons, and smiths. On November 10 the army of the King encamped before the walls of La Charité.

The weather grew cruelly cold. The food became less and less. The Burgundian commander of the town, a clever rascal, led the French on to exhaust themselves in useless assaults. The hungry, freezing soldiers grew discouraged. Jeanne's Voices were silent, and she seems not to have objected when the siege was given up and the army marched shamefacedly away. Perhaps she did not know that they had ungratefully left behind the guns lent them by Orléans. If she knew it, it must have distressed her.

Neither D'Aulon nor De Metz would have let Jeanne hear what they whispered to each other.

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[1] lȧ shă-rē-tā′.

"Do you think," asked De Metz as they rode side by side toward Bourges, "that there was really no money to pay for a successful siege? Or could the King have sent help if he would?"

"He could, yes," answered the sturdy squire, "and perhaps he would. But when could Charles of Valois do as he would? It is La Trémouille and the Council who waste the Maid's power. She has power to inspire the men such as no general ever had; they would follow her to the gates of hell. And these fools who decide our destinies for us choose to throw her gifts away."

"You think—?

"I think D'Albret's pocket, and La Trémouille's, know something about why we retreat."

"France is sunk low," said De Metz bitterly, "when her generals take pay to let her armies run away."

Jeanne gave a different explanation for the failure.

"Since my Voices did not speak to me," she confessed, "I trusted in the advice of men. It was not good. After this I must wait for commands from my Voices."

Back at the castle of Mehun, Charles, weak but kindly, had his own way of comforting Jeanne. He could not restore the faith of France in the marvelous power of the Maid, a faith almost shattered now by the defeats at Paris and La Charité. But he could make her and her family members of the nobility of France. To his light mind, nothing could seem a greater reward than that.

Jeanne cared very little about her title of Lady Du Lys,[1] or about her coat of arms, already painted on her banner.[2] But she knew that her father and mother would be glad, and she could see for herself that her brothers were delighted. No longer peasants, they could mingle with the proudest nobles of the realm, and so could their children's children after them.

Neither did Jeanne care much about the pleasant court life, the fine clothes she wore, the splendid horses she rode. Ordinarily she would have enjoyed these things, like any other girl, but she felt that her precious year was being wasted. What would happen at the end of it to interfere with her work she did not know; but while it lasted she had more important things to do than drag wearily along after the King from castle to castle.

Restless and unhappy, Jeanne tried to wait patiently till the end of the truce with Burgundy. In January she went for a visit to Orléans, to attend a banquet in her honor, which cheered her spirits. In February the court went to La Trémouille's castle at Sully. In March bad news came from Rheims. All through that region Burgundian armies were being made ready for the end of the truce. And at this critical time the governor of Rheims had deserted the city. Also, one of the cathedral clergy had been caught in a plot with Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, to betray Rheims to the English. Cauchon hated the French for having stolen his city of Beauvais, which in September had revolted against him and driven him away.

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[1] The name means "Of the Lilies"; pron. dü lē′.

[2] See page 98.

The men of Rheims, in great fear, wrote all this to Jeanne, and she answered them hopefully. She was sure that in a few weeks Charles would lead his army northward again. But three days before the end of March she had to write again, still promising help, but knowing as she wrote that Charles was preparing to move, not to war, but to his castle at Jargeau.

"My year is almost gone," she said to herself over and over, pacing the stone floor of her luxurious cage. "They will not let me finish what I was sent to do. The King cares nothing for his kingdom. His ministers would sell the realm for gold. What shall I do? How can I yet save France?"

Already, though she did not realize it fully, her resolution was being made.

CHAPTER XXIII

JEANNE'S LAST BATTLES

ON a bright day at the end of March, just a little more than a year after Jeanne's first arrival at a royal castle, a group of riders passed out of the castle gate at Sully and galloped northward. They seemed, from their dress, to be going for a ride through the country in the pleasant spring sunshine. But though the porter waited for their return, they did not come.

Before the portcullis was lowered for the night the warder reported to La Trémouille, master of the castle.

"My lord," he said, "the Maid, her two brothers, and the Sire d'Aulon rode out this morning and have not yet returned. With them was the priest, Brother Pasquerel. Shall we hold the gate longer open? Or shall we send men to search for them?"

La Trémouille showed surprise. "They intended to ride only to Jargeau," he said. "Some harm may have befallen them. Close the gate, but post a watchman to signal their coming, so that they may be let in with all hospitality."

But though the watchman peered all night into the darkness, no riders returned. Next day La

Trémouille and the other counselors were surprised and angry. The Maid must have taken flight secretly, they said, not being permitted by the King to go. But when Charles summoned La Trémouille, the conversation went to a different tune.

"So she is gone," said Charles regretfully.

"Your majesty gave her leave," said La Trémouille. "And she can do no harm without an army. She will hardly reach the vicinity of Paris before the end of the truce. When that comes, the Archbishop may be glad of her help at Rheims. Meantime, she will hardly fight the whole of England and Burgundy single-handed, but she will be content because she is in arms."

"I shall miss her," said Charles. "She was like a ray of sunshine or a drink of cold water. But perhaps it will be restful not to hear her urging me to fight. And D'Aulon will see that no harm overtakes her."

Of this La Trémouille was not so sure, nor was he sure that he hoped it. The Maid was a continual threat to his power. Yet the council felt that they might still have need of her. They had consented to her going away, on condition that she seem to go of her own accord, without leave, as if running away; for the King must not seem to break the truce.

As for Jeanne, even though she had no army, she wanted at the end of the truce to be on the scene of the fighting. If the King would not help her to drive the English out of France, she must do it alone. That was the last part of the task laid upon her by the King of Heaven. Her Voices no longer gave her definite directions; they left her to rely on her own judgment, and even foretold trouble for her. But they still commanded her to go forward, and she must obey.

Not far from Sully the Maid and her little escort fell in with a band of about a hundred mounted soldiers, with half as many archers. Perhaps these men had been sent to meet her, that she might not journey unprotected, but their coming was made to appear accidental. Together they marched straight north, going slowly and quietly, so as to avoid the hostile forts that blocked the way. What happened during their two weeks of journeying no one knows; but by the middle of April, the truce being ended, they crossed the Seine at Melun,[1] on the day before Easter.

The citizens of this place had only the day before risen in revolt against the English, and Burgundian soldiers quartered there had driven them out, and had declared their loyalty to Charles VII. So they were glad to receive Jeanne, who with her company of soldiers would be helpful if the army tried to retake the town.

The Maid stayed at Melun a week, and there something very important happened. For the first time since she left St. Denis her Voices gave her definite knowledge.

[1] mā-lūṅ′.

She was on guard beside the moat, one day, when she heard them say, "Before St. John's Day you will be captured."

St. John's Day would be on June 24.

"When I am captured," Jeanne cried in distress, "let me die at once, without a long imprisonment."

The Voices merely replied that her capture was necessary. "Do not be surprised when it happens," they added. "Take all willingly, and God will help you."

From that moment, Jeanne felt sure that her time for saving France would be not longer than ten weeks, and perhaps much less. Every meeting with the enemy would be weighted down with risk. Yet she did not turn her back on her task; she did not return to the King and his castle at Jargeau.

In May, with her little body of troops, the Maid marched northward again to Lagny[1] on the Marne, very near Paris. She had heard that its people made good war on the English, as she said. She soon found that this report was true, for she went with the French garrison of the town to meet and fight a wandering band of English and Burgundian soldiers, who had just plundered a village and an abbey near by. After some hard fighting, they were all killed and captured. It was a small victory, when compared with the saving of Orléans, just a year before.

[1] lȧn-yē′.

In Lagny took place one of the occurrences that many people, in telling of Jeanne's career, called a miracle. A child which had died at birth and was therefore unbaptized was brought to the church and laid before the altar of the Virgin, in the hope that it might revive. An unbaptized child could not be buried in holy ground, and its soul, the church said, was lost; so the parents were in great distress. All the maidens of the town were praying around the child when Jeanne entered the church, and they asked her to join them. So she added her prayers to theirs.

In a few moments a faint color came into the baby's ashen face, and it gave a feeble cry. The priest, who was waiting with the godparents, at once performed the rite of baptism; so that, though the child died immediately after, it could be buried in holy ground and its soul was saved.

Jeanne was surprised, afterwards, when people said that she had brought the dead child back to life. "I was only one of a great many who prayed," she said; adding sensibly, "and I am not sure that the baby ever was dead."

By the time Jeanne left Lagny to go to Senlis, she had gathered as her little army a thousand horsemen. They had to camp outside Senlis, the city being willing to quarter only Jeanne and her forty chief officers. But another city was only too glad to receive them. This was Compiègne, which was expecting any day to be besieged by the Duke of Burgundy, and to which, on May 13, Jeanne removed with her troops.

Compiègne was one of the cities that the previous August had declared their loyalty to Charles. It was a strongly fortified town, with about five hundred soldiers to defend it, their captain being William, Lord of Flavy.[1] He had refused the city to Duke Philip, who demanded its surrender, and as a result the Duke, with a great army and many huge cannon, was on his way to conquer it. He had seized Noyon,[2] and was now besieging the castle of Choisy,[3] a few miles from Compiègne.

Jeanne was received with great honor, and immediately was taken into the councils of the lords and generals, among whom were her old acquaintances the Archbishop of Rheims and the Count of Vendôme. Help was to be sent to Choisy. The first plan for doing so was to seize the bridge across the Oise[4] River at Noyon, across which supplies for the Burgundian army had to come. A force of about two thousand soldiers, taking Jeanne with them, tried to accomplish this, but were driven back after sharp fighting.

Then they tried a second plan. They marched along the south bank of the Aisne[5] to Soissons, where they hoped to cross the bridge and march to relieve Choisy. But the captain of the city, although an official of the King of France, was a traitor, who was about to sell the place to the Duke of Burgundy. He would not let the army pass through to cross the river, and they had to withdraw.

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[1] flä-vē′. [2] noy-ōṅ′. [3] shwä-zē′. [4] wäz. [5] ān.

In these excursions Jeanne, with the warning of capture in her mind, followed the will of others, not asserting her own. But now came a moment when she must decide for herself. Just as they had a year before at Orléans,[1] the French nobles became discouraged. The country was poor and the living for the army scanty. Many of the captains, leaving Compiègne to its fate, started south from Soissons, toward Senlis and the Marne; but the loyal Jeanne would never desert her friends. In spite of the fear of capture hanging over her head, she stopped at Crépy, where the road turned back toward Compiègne.

Here for three days she waited, till she heard that Choisy had fallen, and had been utterly destroyed by Duke Philip, who was now beginning to surround Compiègne as the English had surrounded Orléans.[2] Once more Jeanne must go to raise a siege; but she sadly missed La Hire and Alençon and Dunois, companions of her splendid days. None of the great leaders of France were left beside her. Nevertheless she said to Bartholomew Baretta, an Italian captain who had fought beside her at Lagny:

"We must go to Compiègne."

"We are too few," he objected. "We could not fight our way past the English and Burgundians posted on the roads between here and there."

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[1] See page 101.

[2] See page 102.

"By my staff, we are enough!" she cried with all her old gallantry. "I will go to see my good friends of Compiègne."

At midnight they left Crépy; at dawn on May 23 they reached Compiègne, unhindered. Flavy was glad to see her, for he thought she might bring success to the attack he was planning for that afternoon on the Burgundian camp across the river at Margny.[1] Two miles above, also on the west bank, was another camp, at Clairoix,[2] where Sire Jean of Luxembourg commanded; and a mile below the English lay at Venette.

Jeanne spent the day quietly and sadly. She went to mass in the morning, talked with the townsfolk, roamed about the city. She missed the cheering crowds of Orléans, the friendship of the generals beside whom she had fought, the enthusiasm of the soldiers whom she had led. This warfare seemed very dull and tame, very petty, very unchivalrous. Still, it was work that had to be done. By afternoon she had worked up some of her old fighting spirit. She put on her armor, with a surcoat of crimson and gold. She girded on a sword taken from a Burgundian at Lagny, and mounted a fine gray horse. At five o'clock, with her banner in her hand, she was ready to ride out at the head of her little troop of five hundred.

[1] märn-yē′.

[2] klär-wä′.

The plan was to ride very swiftly across the bridge, take Margny by surprise, and destroy the Burgundian force there. Gunners on the walls and archers in boats along the shore were to give assistance if needed. The success of the whole undertaking depended on its swiftness.

All went well at first. The camp, as yet unfortified, was surprised, and its few defenders killed or driven away. But it happened that Jean of Luxembourg was riding unarmed along the shore of the river, and from the top of a hill a little way off saw his men being badly beaten. He sent one messenger dashing to Clairoix and another to Venette, to bring reinforcements.

There was still plenty of time for the party from Compiègne to destroy the camp and return safely to the city. But French soldiers in that day could never resist the temptation to seek for plunder. They stayed to ransack the tents and baggage, gathering all the booty they could find. Before they finished their greedy search, soldiers from Clairoix had arrived to retake the camp. Upon this, the French retreated, with their booty, toward the bridge.

But as they went, they chanced to look southward and saw an English force arriving to cut off their retreat. In a panic, they took to mad flight. Some plunged toward the boats moored in the river; others made for the bridge.

Jeanne and the few tried soldiers of her bodyguard did not lose their heads. A captain, she knew, must cover the retreat of his men. So she and her brother Pierre, with D'Aulon and his brother, fought the enemy back while the fleeing soldiers sought to escape. Perhaps she remembered Glasdale at the Tourelles, covering the retreat of his men.[1] Meantime the English and Burgundians had become so mingled with the French, in the conflict, that the gunners and archers on the walls dared not shoot to help their friends, for fear of killing friends rather than enemies.

Even the Burgundians admired Jeanne's stand at the bridge. "She was always behind the others as they retreated," wrote one, "making a great effort to support her men and withdraw them without loss." "She remained behind, as the chief and most valiant of her band," wrote another.

The stanch knights of the Maid's bodyguard saw that the day was lost.

"Hasten to regain the city, or we are lost," they shouted to her.

"Keep silence!" she shouted back. "Their defeat depends on you! Think only of striking them!"

At last, when the retreating French were all upon the bridge, D'Aulon seized the bridle of Jeanne's horse, forcing her to turn toward Compiègne. But the entrance to the bridge was blocked by the enemy, and already Flavy, seeing the town in danger, had closed the gate and lowered the portcullis. Afterwards, it was said that this gentleman, who held his position by favor of La Trémouille, had agreed with the enemy to betray Jeanne into their hands.

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[1] See page 117.

There was no escape. Jeanne's little troop were caught between English and Burgundians. Her protectors were struck down or captured; a dozen hands were laid upon the defenseless girl, catching at her clothing, her bridle rein, her stirrups. Her frightened horse reared and plunged. Twenty voices demanded her surrender.

"I have pledged my faith to someone greater than you," she answered stoutly, "and I will keep my oath."

Finally an archer seized the gay crimson cloak and dragged her from her horse. She was disarmed, still refusing to yield, and led a prisoner to the camp, while everywhere sounded the cry of joy:

"The French witch is taken!"

The Duke of Burgundy had arrived, and Jeanne was taken before him. Gentlemen and noblemen crowded around, peering over each other's shoulders, all eager for a look at the famous Maid. They saw only a straight, sturdy, very much disheveled girl, with a cropped black head carried high above a torn crimson cloak, and with brave gray eyes that met their hostile glances unafraid.

Jeanne's warfare for France was over, but her spirit was unconquered.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN CAPTIVITY

ON one of the last days of May a party of Burgundian soldiers rode out of their camp at Clairoix and took the road northward. Their leader was Count Jean of Luxembourg, and beside him rode a slight figure in the black suit of a page. Although she was a prisoner, with men-at-arms riding before and behind to prevent any attempt at a dash for liberty, Jeanne sat her horse proudly, with head erect. The Sire d'Aulon, riding behind her, looked at her with admiring affection. Her spirit was hard to break, he thought.

Jean of Luxembourg, though a rough and brutal character, was a gentleman by birth. He could appreciate courage and ability even in an enemy; so he treated the Maid with such courtesy as he knew. He had firmly believed that she was a witch, but her conduct during the four or five days spent in his camp had made his opinion waver. Moreover, he was in high good humor at having won so rich a prize.

The French were sure to pay a very high ransom for so valuable a prisoner as this warrior Maid who had served them so well.

"Where are you taking me?" Jeanne asked him with her simple directness.

"To my castle at Beaulieu,[1] about twenty miles from here. It is a stronghold, but you will be comfortable there, and your own squire will wait upon you."

"I am glad," she answered, turning to smile at D'Aulon. "But I hope I shall not stay long as your guest," she went on. "Very soon, I am sure, my King will send for me."

"He must pay high for you, my girl," said the blunt soldier.

"He will pay," she answered confidently. "He knows my worth."

"Others know it, too," Luxembourg informed her. "The Duke has had a letter from the faculty of the University of Paris, demanding that we send you to them to be tried for heresy before the Vice-Inquisitor."[2]

"For heresy!" cried Jeanne in horror. "But I am a true daughter of the Church!"

"As to that I know nothing, being a soldier and no churchman. But I know that I shall not for nothing yield up a prize like you to yonder priests, when by waiting I may have thousands of crowns from

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[1] bō-lyö′.

[2] The Inquisition was that department of the Roman Catholic Church which tried and punished persons suspected of sins against the faith. In each country of Europe except England there was an Inquisitor, the head of this court. The Vice-Inquisitor was his assistant.

Charles of France. So also thinks the Duke. Witch or no witch, you go to the highest bidder."

"Did you so answer the holy fathers?"

"We did not answer at all, nor shall we. This is an affair of the honor of war, not of religion. Do you see the spires against the sky there? That is Noyon. Beaulieu is beyond."

Luxembourg was too much a soldier, and Jeanne too much a country girl, to suspect that the letter from the University was the first shrewd move on the part of the English to get possession of the dreaded witch. Now that she was a prisoner, they did not mean to let her go free again, to work further disaster to their power. But, according to the military code of that time, a prisoner had the right to be ransomed. There was no lawful way to prevent that—except one. And that one the priests of the University of Paris, all English sympathizers, thought of. It was to remove the prisoner from the protection of the laws of war by charging her with an offense against the laws of religion.

In Jeanne's case the clergy were quite honest in thinking that they had every right to accuse her in such a way. All the English, all the Burgundians, all the party of French nobles and priests hostile to Charles thought the Maid a woman of loose morals, who had worked her wonders by the power of the devil. Feeling, as every nation in war time does, that God was on their own side, they were sure that it was not God who helped her. Satan, rather, had appeared to her as an angel. In those days, everyone, however intelligent, believed firmly in witchcraft. Jeanne, they thought quite honestly, must be a witch. So the charge against Jeanne was not something invented by the priests at the command of the English, however conveniently it may have fitted in with English plans and wishes.

For, if the Church found her guilty of witchcraft, it would be the duty of every good Christian to condemn her. Then the greatest danger to the English power would be out of the way.

So the letter had been sent to the Duke of Burgundy, and, when no answer to it was received, another way was tried to get possession of Jeanne. The English found a person ready and eager to help them. This was Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais. He was a learned churchman, a clever politician, and a stanch friend of the English. He hated Jeanne, not only because he believed her a witch, but also because of the revolt of Beauvais. The English, moreover, had promised to make him Archbishop of Rouen,[1] and he wanted to please them. Finally, he would win glory for himself by presiding at the trial of the famous sorceress, who had been captured in a region over which he had authority as judge.

This very able, cold, and cruel man was sent, after six weeks of waiting for a reply to the University's letter, to visit the Duke of Burgundy and Jean of Luxembourg and arrange for the purchase of the Maid.

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[1] rōō-ôṅ′.

Meantime, Jeanne at Beaulieu, waiting in her stone tower for ransom, was comfortably lodged, well fed, and courteously treated. The faithful D'Aulon was at her side, so that she was not annoyed by the guards, who stood all day outside her door, and followed her whenever she was allowed to walk or ride abroad. Although she missed Brother Pasquerel, who had been separated from her during the last adventurous weeks, she was permitted a confessor and allowed to attend mass. None the less, to stay caged there, idle, useless, inactive, was torment to the girl who, long before she was a soldier, had led the energetic, outdoor life of a peasant.

Day after day she stood at her narrow stone window, looking across the plains of Picardy to the south.

"Surely someone will come today," she thought each morning.

"Surely someone will come tomorrow," she thought each night.

Whom did she expect? The Duke of Alençon, perhaps, riding up in all his princely splendor to offer a rich ransom from her "gentle King," to whom she had given a crown? Or stanch La Hire, at the head of his daredevil band, galloping to her rescue? Or Dunois, bringing a purse heavy with the gold of the loving citizens of Orléans and Tours, poured out to save the Maid who had delivered them?

None of these came. Each cloud of dust on the horizon proved to be only a troop of Burgundian soldiers on an errand for her captor.

It was well that she did not know why no effort was made to save her.

The people of France, indeed, mourned for Jeanne, especially in the cities of the Loire. The folk who thought of her as a saint and wore the medals with her image still believed in her. In their churches they said masses and prayers for her safety. In Tours a day of public mourning was held. But words and tears were not costly, and not a word was said of collecting money for her ransom.

In Rheims the Archbishop assured his people that God had permitted Jeanne to be captured because she was proud and followed her own will, not God's. Perhaps this was the reverend father's way of quieting his conscience when it reminded him that he and La Trémouille had done most to hinder the march to Paris from Rheims, and that, if Paris had been taken then, Jeanne would not be a captive now. To persuade himself that she deserved her fate was an easy way to excuse himself from trying to help her.

Wherever La Hire and Alençon and Dunois and the rest of the generals may have been, they knew the uselessness of any attempt at military rescue without the whole French army and the orders of the King behind them. They regretted her misfortune; but they were not men to follow a forlorn hope. After all, they felt that they had been the real leaders in battle and assault, taking Jeanne along merely to bring them good fortune. Her luck had run out now; well, let the King and council ransom her if they would. It was the King who had gained by her deeds, not the army.

But Charles, safe in Chinon or some other castle on the Loire, gave little thought to the Maid. He had sunk back into the state of indifference from which she had aroused him for a few weeks. He was utterly in the hands of La Trémouille and his courtiers. Far from sending money for her ransom, he sent her not even a message. It was as if, in his comfortable, pleasure-filled life, she no longer existed. He had his crown and his castles, and the English were far away from Touraine. There was nothing for which he needed Jeanne. Why should he trouble himself about her?

Perhaps he had a moment of remorse when one day he received a letter from his old instructor, the Archbishop of Embrun, who wrote:

> "I advise you to spare neither effort nor gold, no matter what it costs, in the matter of recovering this girl and of purchasing her life. Otherwise you will deserve the shame, never to be blotted out, of disgraceful ingratitude."

But Charles did not fear to be accused of ingratitude. He feared much more La Trémouille's refusal to lend him money.

Jeanne knew none of these things. The King was her lord and master, who could do no wrong. The cities loved her; the generals were her friends and comrades. Surely, surely, someone would come tomorrow!

June passed; a year was gone since Patay. July passed; a year was gone since the coronation. No one came, except Pierre Cauchon. From D'Aulon she heard of his visit, after the middle of July.

"He came with more letters from the University," said the good squire. "He had been first to speak with Duke Philip."

"What did the letters say?" asked Jeanne anxiously.

"From what I overheard, they urged that you be turned over to this Bishop Cauchon, and said you were a danger to the Church and all the people of France, if allowed to go free."

"To Cauchon?" She shivered. "But he hates me because of Beauvais. He will do me harm."

"He wants to try you before a church court for witchcraft and heresy."

She brightened. "Such things they can never prove of me. And a church court? That is well. The Church is a loving mother to her children. And my Voices are her saints."

"Well, we shall see. Probably we shall see soon, for this Bishop offers ten thousand pounds for you from the English King. Luxembourg is no man to refuse such a sum."

"Ten thousand pounds for me!" Jeanne's simple vanity was delighted. "But it is the ransom of a prince! Am I then worth so much?"

"It seems so, to the English. I would not reckon your value in gold," said the old man.

Returning later in the day, he gave Jeanne another piece of news.

"One of Cauchon's escort, a knight I once knew, tells me that that poor city of Compiègne, which you have loved so much, is about to be surrendered to the enemies of France," he said sadly.

"It shall not be," cried Jeanne, with something of her old fire. "None of the places which the King of Heaven has restored through me into the hands of the gentle King Charles shall be retaken by his enemies, if he will be diligent in guarding them."

None the less, this news of Compiègne made her anxious. To go to the help of the city became her one desire. She sought a way of escape. The walls of her tower room were made of planks, and apparently some of them were loose. Watching her chance, she slipped out between two of these loose boards. She looked about for her warders; they were deep in discussion over a game of dice at the far end of the passage. The stairs were near. Noiselessly she gained them, and made her way down and outside the tower. So far, so good.

She shut the heavy oaken door behind her; her hand was on the bolt to draw it, locking her warders in. But a heavy hand was laid on her shoulder.

"Not today will you escape, French witch," growled the porter in his rough peasant's voice, as he thrust her in at the door and pushed her up the stairs toward her prison.

The warders, trembling at what might have happened to them at the unmerciful hands of Jean of Luxembourg, carried the news to their master. He, having no mind to lose ten thousand pounds, though he would not yield his prisoner until he saw the money, decided to send his precious bird to a safer cage. D'Aulon, too, who must have known of her wish to escape, should be guarded more closely.

So Jeanne was removed to Luxembourg's chief castle, Beaurevoir,[1] and shut up in one of its high towers, while D'Aulon was left at Beaulieu. Perhaps the good squire was ransomed afterwards; it is not known. Jeanne missed him sadly, for she was all alone now among strangers and enemies. She no longer looked from her window in the hope of seeing rescuers. She had begun to feel that France had forgotten her.

At Beaurevoir, however, she found some new friends, Luxembourg's wife, the Lady Jeanne of Bethune,[2] and his maiden aunt, the Demoiselle Jeanne of Luxembourg, an invalid seventy-seven years old. Both were lovely ladies, kind and tender-hearted, and the older lady particularly had lived a saintly life. The younger lady's first husband had been killed at Agincourt,[1] so that she did not love the English.

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[1] bō-rē̆-vwär′.

[2] bē̆-tūn′.

Until these ladies saw Jeanne, they had believed what had been told them, and had been sure she was a witch. But her look and speech and manner of life soon showed them that she was only a simple and lovable peasant girl. After that they treated her with tender affection, and did many things to make her imprisonment more bearable.

The one thing about Jeanne that shocked the ladies of Beaurevoir was her dress. Perhaps, when she was fighting, it was necessary for her to dress as a man; but now that she was living quietly in a castle, why should she not put on a costume that was more proper?

One day the old lady came to the tower with a piece of fine cloth in her hands, and sewing materials as well.

"You say that you can sew, my child. Will you not make yourself a dress and wear it for my sake?"

Jeanne's eyes filled with tears. "Alas, my lady, I wish that I need not refuse you! But it is not yet time. And I have not Our Lord's permission to lay off the dress he commanded me to wear." Then, seeing how disappointed her kind old friend looked, she added, "I would do it for you sooner than for any other lady in France, except the Queen."

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[1] The famous battle in which Henry V of England conquered the French in 1415: ä′zhăn-ko͝or.

When Jeanne said that it was not yet time, she probably meant that as long as she was imprisoned under the eyes of rough soldiers, it was safer to wear the costume which best protected her.

In the hours that she spent alone in her tower, Jeanne thought most of all of the danger of Compiègne. Her jailers delighted in telling her of every fresh disaster to the town, until her one wish was to escape and go to save it. The siege drew tighter and tighter about its walls, but all she could do at Beaurevoir was to pray.

"Will God let these good folk of Compiègne perish?" she thought, "they who have been so loyal to their king? I would rather die than not go to their aid."

So came into her mind the idea of leaping from her tower window. If she died, she would at least be saved from the English; if she lived unharmed, she could go to Compiègne.

But her Voices forbade her. "Do not leap," they said. "God will aid you, and also Compiègne."

Jeanne argued with the heavenly Council. "When God aids Compiègne, I wish to be there."

"You must be patient. You cannot be released until you have seen the King of England," the Voices insisted.

Then Jeanne burst into tears. "I do not wish to see him," she sobbed; "and I would rather die than fall into the hands of the English."

Finally, one day in August, she learned from her warders that Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, had come to Beaurevoir. So the English were still on her trail, still wanting to buy her!

She stood at her narrow slit of a window, which had no bars. She was slim enough to slide through it, sidewise. She stepped outside upon the sill; she looked down from that dizzy height. "Better death here than in an English prison," she thought. "And I may not die. God and Our Lady preserve me!"

And she jumped.

The next thing she knew, she seemed to be coming out of a mist, as if very far away she heard voices crying, "She is dead!" Then soldiers ran up, relieved and amazed to find their prisoner alive, with no bones broken, though stunned and badly bruised. They carried her up the steep winding stair to her tower; they laid her on her bed. There for three days she lay, eating and drinking nothing; after that she came quickly back to health.

She felt that she had done wrong in disobeying her Voices and attempting suicide, but, when she confessed her fault to them, they forgave her.

The visit from Cauchon which had frightened Jeanne into this attempt on her own life was for the purpose of again offering ten thousand pounds for the prisoner. This time the payment was promised in gold, not merely as a written bond. Although his wife and his aunt begged Luxembourg not to sell to the cruel English this girl of whom they had grown fond, the money was a stronger argument than any they could use. To him it was all a mere matter of business, and by the laws of warfare he was within his rights. He agreed to give up the Maid as soon as the gold was paid. To produce it would take the English some time, as a special tax had to be collected in Normandy in order to obtain so much money.

All this was told to Jeanne by her keepers, who took pleasure in her distress. Her only comfort was that her Voices told her the siege of Compiègne was soon to be lifted. For herself she gave up all hope. She was alone. She was forsaken. She was sold to the dreaded English.

Now that his prisoner was worth almost her weight in gold, Luxembourg became uneasy about her safety. A castle in an open countryside was too much exposed to the attack of any band of soldiers who might wish to snatch his prize from him. So late in September he sent the Maid to the Burgundian city of Arras where she was shut up in a castle in the middle of the town.

At Arras Jeanne heard the news that Compiègne was saved. The Count of Vendôme and the Sire De Boussac had come with a French army, and on October 24 had driven away the Burgundians. For a moment her hopes soared high. Surely, now that they were so near, these old comrades would come and rescue her. Surely they would bring a ransom larger than the price the English had offered. Luxembourg would take the highest price.

But it was too late, even if Charles had intended any such thing. And he gave no sign of even knowing that Jeanne was to be sold to the English. La Hire was busy with battles in Normandy; De Boussac went away to fight in the valley of the Marne. By the middle of November the ten thousand pounds of taxes had been collected, and the English demanded the delivery of their prisoner, bought and paid for. She was sent by Luxembourg to Le Crotoy,[1] at the mouth of the Somme, where for the first time the inland girl had a glimpse of the sea; and there the English took over their captive. Her most dreaded fate had befallen her.

Now that they had her, the English must decide what to do with her. Their natural impulse, since most of them were honorable gentlemen, was to treat her as a prisoner of war, keeping her in captivity but leaving her otherwise unharmed.

"But that will anger the clergy of Paris, our best friends," said some. "For reasons that a mere soldier cannot understand, they think her a heretic and wish to try her as such."

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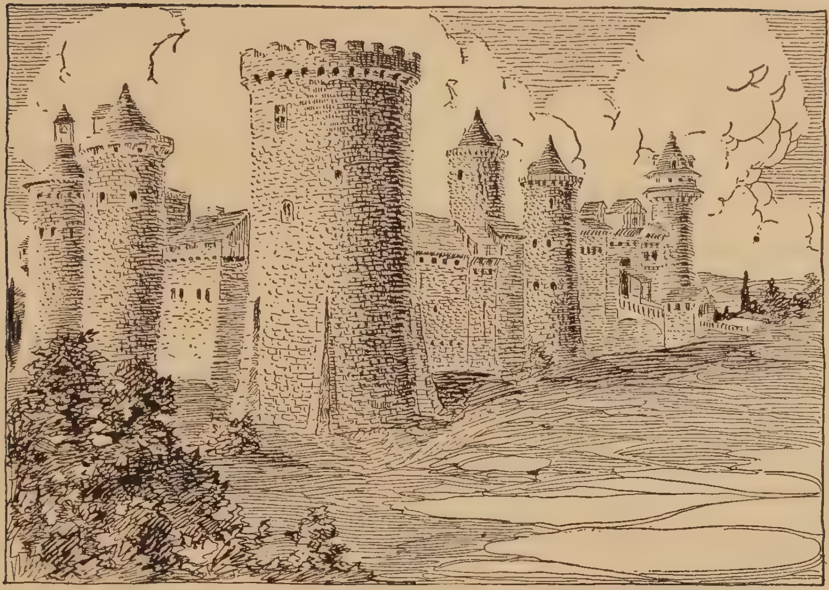
[1] lĕ krō-twä′.



The castle of Philip Augustus where Joan was imprisoned at Rouen. Joan's tower was the first showing to the right of the great tower, a portion of the latter being all that remains of the castle today

"They say she has set up her will against the Church, in claiming to have messages direct from God," said others.

Moreover, the principal English leaders wished to disgrace the girl who had frightened them into defeat. To give her honorable imprisonment would not do this.

"She is a witch, as we all know," they argued. "Unless we prove her a witch by fair trial, we shall seem to be imprisoning a messenger of God. For if she were not a witch, her claims would all be true, and we should be all miserable sinners." Such was the opinion of the majority.

The priests of the University of Paris wanted her tried in that city. But the road from Le Crotoy to Paris was full of risks of rescue. It was safer to take her to Rouen, the capital of English Normandy. The trial could take place there, and the Parisian clergy could come there as judges.

So to Rouen Jeanne was sent. Once more she rode in at an ancient city gate, with armed horsemen on either side of her. This time she wore no shining armor, and the banner over her head bore St. George of England. Once more she rode through an ancient street, between ranks of men, women, and children, crowding to see her. This time there were no cheers or waving banners. The people stood in a hushed silence, motionless, gazing with a fearful curiosity at the witch whose magic was ended.

Her dismal journey over, the Maid alighted at the gate of one of the seven strong towers of the royal castle. This tower was a hundred feet high, with walls twelve feet thick. The little room in which Jeanne was placed was up a short flight of stairs, and was only about twenty feet in diameter. Very little light and air came in through a narrow slit in the wall. The place was dirty, barren, and bitterly cold.

Because she had twice tried to escape, and because she was a witch and might fly away, her captors did not leave her free even in this little space, but chained her fast. Her feet were in fetters, chained to a great beam in the floor, near enough to her bed so that she could lie down at night.

In this narrow cell, which brought unspeakable torture to the free, outdoor spirit of the girl from Lorraine, Jeanne was guarded by five English soldiers —not knights or squires, but common men-at-arms. They mocked and struck her, and were delighted when she reproached them for it. All five were in her room by day; at night, two went outside the door to watch. They teased her now with threats of death, now with hopes of rescue. They sang ribald songs and drank and cursed.

So, in the dark, in chains, Jeanne sat among her enemies, waiting. But she was not alone; her Voices promised to save her, and her spirit did not fail.

CHAPTER XXV

IN ROUEN

WHILE Jeanne waited in her dungeon, Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, was leading a busy life. Although the English insisted on keeping Jeanne in their own prison, they had agreed that she should be tried by a church court. Cauchon, as he hoped, had been given the right to preside at the trial. He wanted to make sure, before proceedings began, that all would turn out as the English wished. He must not lose the reward they had promised him.

But in order that public opinion should not take the side of the prisoner, as it would if people thought her unjustly treated, the trial must be conducted fairly, and must be made as impressive as possible. Besides, Cauchon was a priest, and the Church must not be misrepresented. Perhaps this girl was not really a witch and a heretic. In that case, she must have a chance to prove that she was not. Cauchon did not wish to condemn Jeanne if she was innocent; but he was very sure that she was guilty.

First, a suitable body of judges was chosen. They were all priests of the party favoring the English and Burgundians. The number of judges who attended the sessions of the court varied from six or eight to more than sixty. The priest chosen to present the case against Jeanne was named Estivet[1]; he came from Beauvais. The chief secretary was one Manchon,[2] of Rouen. It is from his record that the facts of Jeanne's trial are known, and some of his comments written in the margin show him to have been a fair-minded man. Jean Massieu,[3] dean of Rouen cathedral, was appointed sheriff, to bring the prisoner back and forth between her tower and the court room.

This court began to hold sittings on January 9, 1431. For six weeks they considered the evidence against Jeanne, preparing the charges to be brought publicly against her. They discussed all that was known or could be found out about her words and acts. A committee went to Domremy, to learn the facts of Jeanne's childhood and girlhood. They came back unable to report anything except good of her character; but they had heard a good deal about the magic fountain and the Fairy Tree which sounded like witchcraft, and they had learned that she had left home against the will of her parents.

No attempt was made to investigate the events of the past two years. The priests who had examined Jeanne at Poitiers were not called into counsel, nor did anyone go to question the folk of Tours or Orléans. Perhaps Bishop Cauchon thought them all bewitched by the Maid, and therefore likely to speak only good of her. But from other parts of France

[1] ĕs-tē-vā′.

[2] mäṅ-shōṅ′.

[3] mä-syẽ′.

came enough stories of Jeanne's wonderworking power to convict ten heretics and twenty witches. Her touch, folk said, was magical; she could tell what had become of lost articles; she had brought a dead child to life; she had foretold this and that and the other event. The story of the sword of St. Catharine was revived. Her banner must have had magic power, for she would not be separated from it. Her Voices were not those of saints but of evil spirits. She had boasted of what she could do, and she had allowed people to kneel to her. She had spoken magic charms over the babies for whom she had been godmother. She had disobeyed God in wearing the dress of a man. She had tried to kill herself. She had attacked Paris on a holy festival day.[1]

By the time all this evidence had been presented to the court, some of the judges, honest men of fine character, began to feel that facts were being twisted to the disadvantage of the prisoner, and that facts in her favor were being kept out of sight. They saw that Cauchon felt her to be guilty before he had proved her so; he had condemned her before the trial. But when they dared to say this, they were dismissed from the court.

Meantime, Jeanne's days in prison were varied by the coming of many visitors curious to see her.

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[1] It is from the written record of this investigation that many of the facts about Jeanne's life, already told in this book, were known to history.

They were puzzled to find that even a witch had not been able by her magic arts to save herself from capture. She talked much too freely, to them and to her jailers, especially about her Voices, and all that she said was promptly reported to the judges.

One day Jean of Luxembourg, the Earls of Warwick and of Stafford, and several other gentlemen came to see their prisoner. The rough Burgundian tried a cruel jest.

"Jeanne," he said, "I have come to buy you back again, if you will promise never again to take up arms against us."

Jeanne looked at him with scorn. "You mock me," she said, "for I know well that you have neither the power nor the wish to do so."

When he insisted that he was in earnest, she only replied, "I know that the English wish to kill me, thinking that after I am dead they can conquer the kingdom of France." Then, with the old-time courage ringing in her voice, she added, "But when there are a hundred thousand more English here than there are now, they will not take the kingdom."

The Earl of Stafford drew his dagger in anger, and would have stabbed her, chained though she was; but the Earl of Warwick, famed for his chivalry, seized his arm and prevented the ungallant deed.

A frequent visitor, whom Jeanne was always glad to see, was a shoemaker from Lorraine, another prisoner in the tower, so he said, who had fought with the French army and been captured by the English. It was good to talk with a friend from her own part of the country. He spoke of her village; he gave her news of the war, of her comrades in arms, of her well-beloved King Charles. He asked her about her Voices, and she told him trustingly.

"Do not believe all these priests, or do what they ask of you," he said at the end of his first visit, "for if you believe them, you will be destroyed."

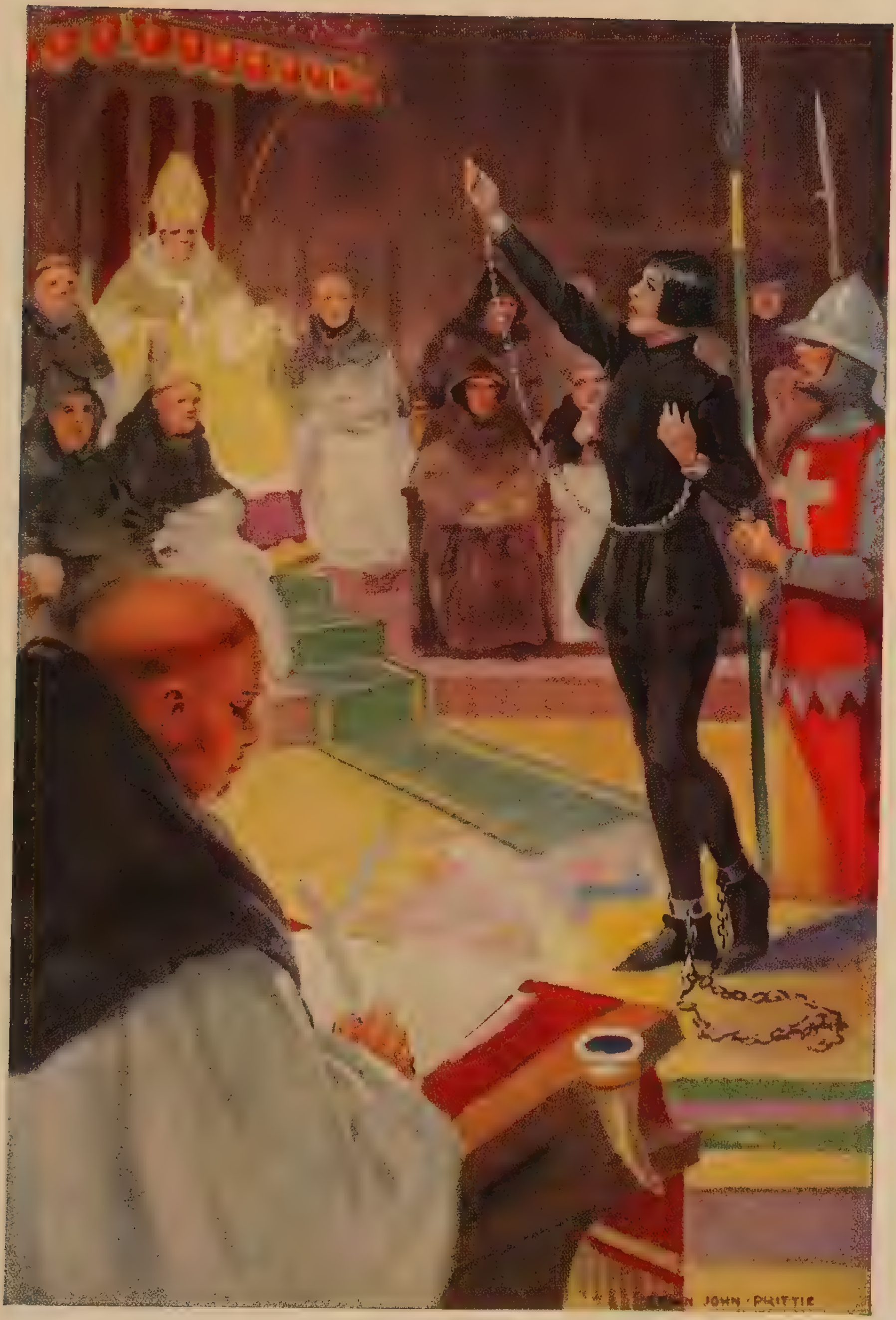
The shoemaker came often, and Jeanne told him all her thoughts and hopes. Each time he went away and reported in writing to the judges all that she had said. For this wretch was really one of the judges himself, a priest of Rouen, one Nicholas Loiseleur,[1] wearing a disguise and acting as a spy.

Finally the charges against Jeanne were completely drawn up, and the court was ready to examine her on the justice of these charges. She was summoned to appear in the royal chapel on February 21. It was just two years since she had ridden out of the gate at Vaucouleurs.

On that winter morning, when the court assembled, there were present, besides Cauchon and the Vice-Inquisitor of France, Jean Le Maitre,[2] forty-one judges. The canons wore the variously colored silken hoods of their cathedrals; the monks were in the dark woolen garb of their orders. It was an imposing

[1] lwä-zlẽr′.

[2] lẽ mātr′.


JOHN · PRITTIE

Jeanne looked small and slight in her black doublet and hose

array of learned men to be faced by an untaught country girl of nineteen years.

Jeanne had sent two requests to the court: one, that she might attend mass before her trial; the other, that French priests in equal number to those of the English party might be included in the court. To both requests the cruel Cauchon said No.

The prisoner was brought in, very pale from the long months of confinement in one dark stone tower after another. She looked small and slight, in her black doublet and hose, with her black cropped hair and her brave gray eyes. The assembled priests and monks drew a shocked breath at sight of her, a woman, in so unwomanly a costume. Not even a woman of low character, in those days, would have appeared with her hair uncovered. The sight of a creature so immodest stirred their hostility to her more than the account of her actions had done.

She was only one against almost fifty, but she walked with courage to the bench they gave her, dragging the chains that clanked on the stone pavement. She did not fear these priests. She expected that the angels and the saints, as she had often heard them say in these last weeks, would come to set her free. She did not know when or how this would happen, but she did not doubt it.

She had heard her Voices tell her not to be afraid, and she was not afraid.

CHAPTER XXVI

BEFORE THE COURT

THE first demand made of Jeanne was that she take the oath to answer truly everything that was asked her. She would not do so.

"I do not know what you will ask me," she said sensibly. "Perhaps you will ask me things that I will not tell you." Cauchon insisted, nevertheless, that she take the oath.

"I will willingly swear to tell the truth about my father and mother," she said then, "and about all that I have done since I came into France. But before I will swear to tell about the revelations I have had from God, you can cut off my head."

At last the Bishop yielded, and let her take the oath in the way she desired—to speak truth about everything that her Voices permitted her to tell.

At every one of the five other sessions of the full court, the last of which was on March 2, this same contest about the oath took place, and every time Jeanne won her way. She never took such an oath as they wished her to.

At this first session, formal questions occupied the time—as to her name, age, birthplace, parents, baptism, and education.

Then she was warned not to try to escape from prison. She gave no promise in return. "If I should escape," she said, "no one could blame me for breaking my word of honor, for I never pledged my word to anyone. But," she added sadly, "I should like not to wear these chains. They are heavy."

"You must wear them because twice you tried to escape."

She agreed. "Yes, I did. I would do so again. Any prisoner would."

There was not much chance that her chains would be taken off if she answered so boldly as that.

As the straight, proud little figure was led away, back to her dungeon, some of the judges already began to waver in their opinion of her.

"Could one be so calm without a clear conscience?" whispered one.

"She has not the face of a woman of low morals," said another.

But they did not dare to say these things aloud; they would have been sent in disgrace from Rouen.

At the other five sessions of the court, held in a hall of the castle, a learned scholar from Paris, Doctor Jean Beaupère,[1] conducted the examination. On February 22, after some questions about her life and occupations at home in Domremy, he proceeded to ask about her Voices. She told the story quite willingly.

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[1] bō-pār′.

"When I was about thirteen years old," she began, "a Voice came to me from God to help me to live well. The first time I was very much afraid. The Voice came at noon in summer, in my father's garden. I heard it at my right, toward the church. There was a light at the place from which the Voice came. After I had heard it three times, I knew it was the voice of an angel."

By this time all the judges were leaning forward, listening intently to the clear, low voice telling the story so simply. She went on to relate how the Voice told her to go to Vaucouleurs. She told of her journey to Chinon. Then she said that she had recognized the King by heavenly guidance.[1]

This was something that the court wanted to hear more about. Perhaps it was by magic that she had recognized the King. Perhaps she had bewitched him.

"Was there a light in the place, or an angel over the King's head?" asked Beaupère.

"A light? Of course," she answered. "It was evening, and there were more than fifty torches. If there was an angel, I did not see him," she ended calmly.

"Did you give the King some sign from heaven?"

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[1] Most of the story of Jeanne's life, as it has been told in this book, is known from her own words during the many days of her trial. Therefore her answers are not given in detail.

"Send and ask the King; perhaps he will tell you." She almost laughed as she said it; this battle of wits was as good as a battle with swords and arrows.

The questioner, baffled, turned to another subject, her sin in having attacked Paris on a holy festival day. During the discussion of this point, another judge rather absurdly asked Jeanne if she had ever been in a place where Englishmen had been killed.

"In God's name, of course!" she answered sharply. "Why did they not leave France and go away to their own country?"

"Bravo!" said an Englishman who was listening. "I wish she were English!"

Two days later, at the third session of the court, many questions were asked about the Voices. When had she heard them last? What had they told her? How did they speak? How did they look?

Jeanne told the court very little about her visions.[1] Her Voices told her to answer boldly, she said, and not to be afraid. Then, turning suddenly to Cauchon, she cried, "Take care what you do, for truly I am sent from God, and you are in great danger!"

Once she happened to say that without God's grace she would not know what to do. The clever priest saw a chance to put her in a corner.

"Do you know that you are in a state of grace?" he asked.

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[1] What she told is to be found in Chapter VI of this book.

It was a very dangerous question. If she said yes, she would seem to boast rashly; if she said no, she would confess herself to be sinful. There was a murmur of objection among the judges, and one said bravely that she ought not to be made to answer.

"Be silent!" Cauchon hissed at him angrily.

But Jeanne made one of those matchless answers that showed her simple faith and goodness, and amazed the court with its wisdom.

"If I am not in a state of grace," she said, "may God put me there; if I am, may God keep me there. I should be the most sorrowful creature in all the world if I knew that I was not in the grace of God."

Beaupère did not carry that point further; he could not. Instead, he turned to her childhood and asked about the Fairy Tree, the enchanted spring, and the grove. She willingly told all that she remembered of the legends about these places; she liked talking of things that brought back dear memories. But she made it very clear that, though she had shared her comrades' games at the tree and the spring, she did not believe the tales of fairies or enchantments. Beaupère completely failed to show what he wished to show, that she had used magic in her youth and that she was a witch from childhood.

Abruptly changing the subject, he asked if she would wear a woman's dress.

"Give me one," she replied promptly. "I will take it and go away. But I will not wear it if I must stay here. I like this dress well enough, since God wishes me to wear it."

Three public sessions remained, on February 27 and March 1 and 2. Very few new topics were introduced. Jeanne told the story of the finding of the sword at Fierbois; she described her banner with glowing affection; she related the stirring events of the rescue of Orléans. Beaupère tried to make it appear that sword and banner were enchanted, and that she had borne a charmed life. He did not succeed; her story was too direct and truthful to leave room for doubt.

She was asked about her rings, and if she ever worked magic charms with them. She laughed at the idea, but said she had sent one as a token of respect to the mother of two of her knightly comrades, the brothers LaVal.

"My jailers have taken the other one away from me," she said wistfully. "I wish you would make them give it back, for it is precious to me. It is not gold, but my parents gave it to me, and it is all I have."

She was asked about the dead child which, to her surprise, she was said to have brought back to life at Lagny. She was asked if she said magic spells over the babies for whom she had been godmother. She was asked about the worship paid to her by kneeling people, and about the masses and prayers said in her honor. For all the questions she had straightforward answers ready, showing that she had acted in no way differently, in the respects mentioned, from any good and religious girl. She knew nothing about the miracles which folk said she had performed; she had not known that they said so. She could not stop people from admiring and loving her; she had not asked them to. She had tried not to let them kiss her hands and touch her garments.

"If people have prayed for me," she said at last, "I cannot think they have done wrong."

Once Beaupère tried to catch her and prove her a heretic by asking her, "Who do you think is the rightful Pope?" At this time there was a rival pope in Rome and the lawful one had been driven to a refuge in southern France.

Jeanne kept out of the trap. She asked innocently, "Are there two?"

Even the severe judges could not help laughing when the tricky examiner thus met his match.

But every day the court came back to the question of her clothing, and every day, more than anything else, to her visions and her Voices.

Of the first subject she grew weary. Her real reason, that she wore the man's dress for safety, going as a maid among men, she was too modest to explain so publicly. At last she burst out:

"Dress is the least of things, less than nothing." After that she would talk no more about it.

As to the Voices she answered thousands of questions. Once, when a dozen judges were all flinging questions at her at once, she laughed with some of her old joyousness at the hopelessness of trying to answer them all.

"Speak one at a time, fair lords!" she cried.

Then, as well as she could, she described the saints and angels which had appeared to her. "I saw them as clearly as I see you," she said, "but I have not permission from my Lord to tell you everything about them."

"When the Voice came, was there a light?" she was asked.

With a touch of the humor with which she had answered the scholars at Poitiers, she answered, "Not all the light comes to you, my good lord."

A trifle annoyed, Beaupère went on with his trivial questions about the saints. Had they long hair? Did they wear earrings? Were their heads covered except by their crowns? Had they arms? How did they speak, and in what sort of voice?

"Their voices were beautiful and sweet," said Jeanne, "and they talked French."

"Why did not Saint Margaret speak English?" asked Beaupère cleverly.

"Why should she speak English when she is not on the English side?"

"Did Saint Michael appear to you unclothed?"

"Do you think God had no clothes for him?" she retorted.

"Had he hair?"

"Why should it have been cut off?" she cried impatiently, weary of the utter absurdity of such questions.

When they asked her what part her Voices had in her recognition of the King at Chinon, she said simply that the King believed her because he had seen a sign. When they asked what the sign was, she replied cheerfully:

"You will not learn that from me this year."

"What did your Voices promise you?" asked Beaupère at another time. It was well known that the devil promised great things to those who served him.

"They promised me that my King should receive his kingdom, and that they would lead me to paradise," she answered.

That did not sound like a promise from Satan, so Beaupère inquired if the Voices now promised her freedom.

"They have promised that I shall be rescued, though I do not know the day nor the hour," she answered, adding, "And I know that within seven years the English shall lose a greater prize than they lost at Orléans, and will suffer the greatest destruction they have ever had in France, through a great victory that God will send the French."

"How do you know this?"

"It has been shown me. I know it as well as I know that you are here before me."

When the sixth session of the court came to its close, Cauchon was discouraged. It was not so easy to prove Jeanne's guilt as he had supposed it would be. Some of the judges were inclined to think her innocent. One had even dared to call out, "Jeanne, you speak well." People in Rouen were beginning to whisper that the examination was not fair, and that the girl was being tormented. The sixty judges had dwindled to forty, the absent ones preferring to stay away from proceedings that offended their conscience. A great Norman lawyer, named Lohier, on a visit to Rouen, dared to tell the angry Cauchon that the trial was not legal, because Jeanne had no defenders or witnesses on her side, and because the sittings were held behind closed doors.

Some change must be made in the conduct of affairs. If it was impossible to *prove* Jeanne guilty, at all events she must be made to *seem* so.

So the Bishop called a recess of a week in the sessions of the court, during which time he arranged that a committee should sum up the evidence collected and decide what questions should be further asked.

The judges were glad of this rest. They were utterly weary from the long days of listening and thinking. They could not understand how each evening Jeanne walked from the hall with elastic step and head erect, nor how each morning she came with fresh courage to the grilling fire of questions.

Her strength, indeed, was of the soul. At night she prayed, and her Voices spoke to her. They told her what to say to her examiners; they promised that she should be set free. They comforted her. She had none of the other comforts of religion; she had not confessed to a priest nor attended mass since she came into the hands of the English, three months before. Her captors did not think it right for a witch to enter a church.

On the first day when she had been conducted from her tower to the castle hall, she had asked Father Massieu, the priest who led her, if there were not a church on the way. Not being a hard-hearted man, he pointed out the chapel of the castle, and let her kneel upon the steps, where through the open door she could see the altar. When Cauchon learned this, he forbade Massieu to permit it again, and Estivet, the accuser, threatened his life. When Massieu paid no attention either to command or to threat, Estivet took care to stand before the chapel door when Jeanne passed, so that she could not see the altar.

At the end of the week's recess, the examination was resumed, but no longer before the full court in the castle hall. Instead, Cauchon selected each day five or six judges to go with him to Jeanne's prison and examine her there. This prevented the sympathy of some from spreading to others, and kept the tongues of Rouen from talking.

During eight days, ten such visits were made. The black-robed priests sat about on benches and stools facing Jeanne on the edge of her bed. The secretary wrote by candlelight. The poor girl was now under more of a strain than ever, for at least the castle hall had given her a change of scene, and the walk there a little exercise and fresh air.

Each day she was questioned about her Voices, about her use of magic and witchcraft, about her wearing of men's dress, until she was weary of all these subjects. She was asked about her capture, about her leap from the tower, about her disobedience to her parents. The examiners hoped to trap her into saying the Voices had given her bad advice, and were therefore not sent by God.

"Why did the angel come to you?" once asked Father La Fontaine.

"Because it pleased God to overthrow the King's enemies by a simple maid," was the beautiful answer.

After five or six of these private trials, Cauchon had still not gathered much evidence by which to prove Jeanne a heretic or a witch. She had disobeyed her parents; she had attacked Paris on a holy day; she had leaped to expected death at Beaurevoir. All these were mortal sins, but not heresy or witchcraft. However, she kept repeating that two of these things she had done by order of her Voices, and that for the third her Voices had forgiven her. She did not seem to think it necessary to ask the permission or the pardon of the Church. Here was a means of proving her a heretic, at least.

"Will you submit your acts and words to the judgment of the Church?" asked La Fontaine, "as to whether you have sinned against the faith?"

Cauchon was sure this trap would catch the simple girl. If she said yes, she as much as said that she doubted the truth of her Voices and of her mission, which then could be proved to be of the devil. If she said no, she rebelled against the Church. He was quite sure she would say no.

She thought for a moment. "All my acts, all my words," she said then, "are in the hand of God, and I submit to him. I assure you I would not wish to sin against the faith, and if I have done any such thing, I will not continue in it."

"Will you submit to the judgment of the Church?" sternly repeated La Fontaine. "Say yes or no."

"I will not answer now. I will tell you on Saturday." This day was Thursday.

On Saturday, when the question was repeated, Jeanne replied, "I love the Church, and I wish to support it with all my power. I would go to church and hear mass if I could. As for my good works and my mission, I submit them to Our Lord, who sent me, and to Our Lady, and to the blessed saints in paradise. Our Lord and the Church are all one. Why do you make difficulties about it?"

They explained to her the difference between the Church Triumphant, which was in heaven, and the Church Militant, which was on earth. She must submit to the Church Militant.

But she answered, as they had hoped she would, "I came to the help of the King of France in the name of Our Lord and of the Virgin Mary and of all the blessed saints, in the name of the Church victorious on high. To that I submit all my acts."

Cauchon now had what he wanted; she had rebelled against the authority of the Church.

That afternoon they asked her many things that they had asked her before. At last they came to her banner. Was it an enchanted banner, since she was unwilling to go into battle without it? But they could not make her say that her victories depended upon her banner.

"All depended upon my Lord," said Jeanne.

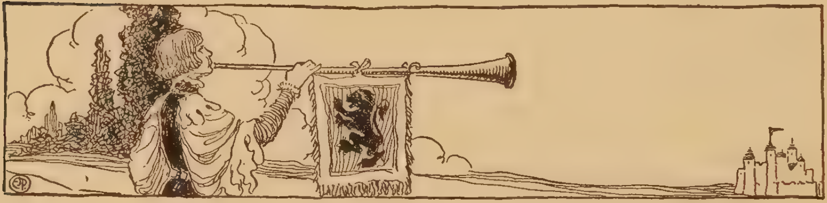
"Why, then, was your banner the only one displayed in Rheims cathedral, at the coronation?" asked La Fontaine.

Forgetting for an instant her dungeon, her jailers, her judges, her weariness, her danger, Jeanne threw up her head; her eyes shone. She saw again the stately cathedral, the splendid noblemen of France, the constable with the sword of state, the Archbishop and the bishops in their violet velvet robes, with cross and mitre, the burning candles, the kneeling crowds, her King crowned. She saw herself standing there, her banner in her hand. Her voice rang out clear, above the silver trumpet notes that sounded in her heart.

"It had borne the burden," she cried; "it had earned the honor!"[1]

Those matchless and pathetic words were the last spoken by Jeanne d'Arc to her examiners.

[1] Mark Twain's translation.



CHAPTER XXVII

ON TRIAL

ON that Saturday night, Jeanne sat sadly in her dungeon. A single torch flared in a socket on the wall. Four of her jailers were laughing and cursing over a game of dice, when the fifth, on guard at the door, brought in a priest. He gave his name as Brother Nicholas, and said he had come to comfort the prisoner. The lonely girl was glad to talk with someone who would not mock at her or abuse her. She had always a great trust in the servants of the Church, so she opened her heart to this kindly confessor.

Especially she talked of her Voices, and how they gave her good advice, although she could not always hear them speak, because of the noise the jailers made.

"They say that I shall be set free within three months," she said. "I do not know when or how; but they always speak truth, so I know that someone will come to save me."

"You would have done well to submit yourself to the Church, however," said Brother Nicholas.

"I submit myself to Our Lord," she answered. "He is greater than the Church. But the Bishop has forgotten that. He has forgotten all but his hatred of me. What will he do next with me? Will he question me any more? I have told all I can."

"The questions are finished, as I hear," said the priest. "Next they will sum up all that you have said in your answers, and when that is done they will decide whether they have good ground for bringing you to trial."

"Have I not then been on trial all this time?" cried Jeanne in surprise.

"By no means. These questionings were only in preparation for the trial."

"Will there be priests of the King's party at the trial, then?" asked Jeanne hopefully.

"I know not. It will, however, be a fair trial, as all acts of the Church are just. You need not fear."

"I do not. My Lord will help me. My Voices tell me so."

After some further conversation, Brother Nicholas went away, leaving Jeanne in ignorance of the fact that the kindly priest was really a spy, the same Nicholas Loiseleur who had pretended to be a shoemaker from Lorraine. He had again tricked her into speaking all her thoughts to an enemy.

There passed a week of dreary waiting in the dismal tower, stared at, insulted, tormented. Then came Palm Sunday, a great festival of the church. Early in the morning Cauchon arrived at Jeanne's cell, with four of the judges, and offered her the chance to go that day to hear mass, if she would put on a woman's dress.

"I cannot," she said sadly. "If I could, it would soon be done."

"Consult your Voices," the Bishop ordered sternly. "See if they will not permit you."

"I cannot," she repeated. "I beg of you to let me hear the mass dressed as I am. This dress does not trouble my conscience, and I do not believe that, in wearing it, I disobey the Church."

"Stubborn girl!" shouted Cauchon. "Do you set your opinion above that of the priests of God?"

"It is not my opinion. It is what my Lord tells me."

The five men went away angry and amazed. Who was this peasant girl, to dare to say that she understood the will of God without a priest to explain it to her?

For several days Estivet, who was to present the case against Jeanne at the trial, had been busy drawing up the accusation. When it was done, it contained seventy articles. On Monday this document was read before the court, and approved by Cauchon and the Vice-Inquisitor, LeMaitre. The other judges, though all present, were not asked for their opinion. Cauchon had good reason for not asking them; he was not at all sure that they would agree.

One group, to be sure, was made up of priests who took the side of the English and who therefore hated

Jeanne. Some of these, the most sincere, probably were honest in thinking her a witch and an evil woman. Another group, though they had no special love for the English, were in English pay; they were the sort of men who cared more for money than for justice or mercy. But many of the judges were fair-minded men who were favorably impressed with Jeanne's conduct under examination, and who would have liked to save her if they could.

Two reasons held them back. Her clinging to the costume that so horrified them, and her stubborn refusal to submit to the Church made them doubt that she was all she claimed to be. And even if a man had been convinced of her innocence, he would have had to be braver than any man there, to assert his belief. The few timid voices that had been raised to help her had been silenced. The really brave men who had spoken out had been threatened and driven from Rouen. It was as much as a man's life was worth to dare to defy Cauchon, for back of Cauchon were the English.

So, with no voice raised in protest, Jeanne was formally summoned to appear next day for trial as a witch and a heretic. In a room adjoining the great hall of the castle, she sat upon her bench, her hated chains still upon her, surrounded by the stern faces of forty-two churchmen. In the silence Cauchon spoke. All her judges, he said, were just and merciful men, learned in the law, who were seeking, not to punish her, but to lead her back to the right way. She was asked to choose, if she wished, one or more of them to assist her in her defense. If she did not know whom to choose, he would name one.

Jeanne did not accept this offer. "I thank you and all this company," she said courteously, "for advising me for my good. I thank you also for the counsel which you offer, but I do not intend to depart from the counsel of Our Lord."

The judges murmured among themselves. Again she was setting up her own right to know what God said as well as any priest among them!

Master Thomas de Courcelles,[1] the most brilliant scholar in the University of Paris, now began to read the seventy articles, which set forth Jeanne's sins against the faith. The accusation began by calling her a witch, a heretic, an idolater, and other terrible names. Then it went on, point by point, to cover the whole story of Jeanne's life, with quotations from her own words to support each statement. Everything charged against her was stated as a fact, though often the quotation from her words denied the charge. For instance, one article charged her with swearing wickedly, and in her examination she had denied this three times.

After each article the reader paused to give the prisoner a chance to answer the charge. Sometimes she corrected the words quoted from her; sometimes she referred the court to what she had said already; sometimes she said that she left the question to God. She was now too suspicious of the justice of this court to be anything but cautious in her answers.

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[1] kōōr-sĕl′.

On two points only she was emphatic. She would not take off her man's dress, she said, without permission from God, even though they cut off her head. And she would not yet answer whether or not she would submit to the Church. Again she promised to give an answer on Saturday.

When Saturday came, and Cauchon arrived with several priests at the prison, Jeanne had made up her mind what to say.

"I will submit all I have done," she declared, "to the Church Militant on earth, provided they do not tell me to do what is impossible."

"And what is impossible?" inquired Cauchon.

"It is to deny my visions, or to repent that which I have done by command of God. I would not do that for anything in the world."

"But suppose the Church told you that your visions came from the devil?"

"All that I did was by command of God," she answered bravely, "and I cannot act except by His command. If the Church tells me to do anything contrary to God's command, I would not do it for anything in the world."

To speak so was to tell these proud priests that she would not accept their judgment as to what were the commands of God. "I know God better than you do," was the meaning of her words. To defy her judges took more courage than to scale the walls of the Tourelles.

Cauchon did not care whether she submitted or not. If she did, he would declare that her acts had been inspired by the devil, showing her a witch. If she did not, she would be a rebel against the Church, and therefore a heretic. The poor child was caught in a cleverly constructed trap, from which she could not get out in either direction.

Next day, April 1, was Easter. All Jeanne's judges went to high mass; perhaps the Bishop of Beauvais officiated. Jeanne sat alone in her prison, uncomforted by the communion which she loved so much.

For two weeks, now, Jeanne was left to the care of her jailers, who made her life miserable enough. The long strain and the unhealthful air of the dungeon were beginning to tell even on her sturdy peasant frame; nervously tired out, she became really ill, and by the middle of April was tossing in a raging fever. It was not a part of the English plan that she should die in prison. The Earl of Warwick, alarmed when her life seemed in danger, came to the tower with several physicians. He spoke very frankly to them.

"The King of England would not have her die a natural death for anything in the world. She is very dear to the King, for he has paid dearly for her.

We intend her to be condemned by the law, and to die as a criminal. So do your best to cure her."

The doctors felt Jeanne's pulse, tested her heart, and advised that she should be bled. That was almost the only remedy doctors in those days knew how to use. Warwick did not like the idea.

"Take care!" he warned them. "She is tricky, and might kill herself."

However, the blood-letting was performed, the fever lessened, and Jeanne grew better at once. But in a few days Estivet, the priest who hated her so bitterly, came to see her, and began to scold and abuse her, calling her evil names. His visit upset Jeanne so much that the fever came on again. Warwick, greatly annoyed, told Estivet he must not go to the prison again. Left to herself, she began slowly to recover.

In the meantime her enemies had been very busy. The seventy articles were so long, and contained so many statements about which the judges could not agree that Cauchon had decided to have the accusation reduced in length. So a committee had spent many days in selecting the most important points, which covered all the charges about which there was no question. The result was a paper containing twelve articles. These articles mentioned in particular Jeanne's belief in and worship of her Voices, her dress, her leap from the tower at Beaurevoir, and her refusal to submit to the Church. Many other points, too, were touched upon.

When this new form of accusation was ready, Cauchon and LeMaitre, with some other judges, went to visit Jeanne in her tower. They said they had come in a charitable spirit, to give her consolation in her illness, for she was still very ill.

"Many things that you have said, Jeanne," began Cauchon in a kindly tone, "seem contrary to the faith. Perhaps that is because you are only an ignorant girl; so, if you wish, these learned men of the church will advise and teach you what you ought to say. The Church," he added, "stretches out loving arms to the sinner who wishes to return to her."

Jeanne thanked him politely. "But I am so ill," she went on, "that I think I shall die. If it is so, God's will be done. I ask you to let me confess and receive the holy sacrament; and to bury me in holy ground."

"If you wish to receive the sacrament," said the Bishop, "you must submit to the Church."

"If I die in prison," she answered, "I hope that you will bury me in holy ground. But if you will not, I trust in God."

"Will you submit to the Church?"

Wearily she replied, "Whatever happens to me, I can say no more than I have already said at the trial."

Harsh voices shouted, gentle voices pleaded, as these churchmen urged her, begged her, commanded her to submit to the Church. She stood her ground.

"I will answer nothing more than I have said already," she insisted. "I love and serve God; I am a good Christian; I wish to aid the Church with all my power."

They could force no other answer from her, and they went away angry.

The judges still could not agree, even upon the twelve articles. Three or four hesitated to condemn Jeanne, thinking that it was possible her visions did come from God, and they would sin in calling her guilty. Others wished the matter referred to the University of Paris. The clergy of Rouen, who had never liked having Cauchon, an outsider, preside at a trial in their city, would not pass upon the case until the Maid had once again been warned of her danger.

So the articles were sent to Paris for the approval of the University, and on May 2 Jeanne was called once more to appear before the court, to be publicly asked to give up her evil ways. Sixty-three judges were present.

The preacher who was to address her had prepared a long written sermon, and held in his hand the thick package of manuscript. After he had read the introduction, he paused and looked at Jeanne, to see if she had anything to say.

A gleam of her old mirth shone in her eyes. "Read your book," she said. "After that I will answer you. I trust in God, my Creator, and I love Him with all my heart."

The priest continued his reading. He stated all the charges against her, and again called on her to submit.

"I will submit only to God himself," she answered.

"You will be burned as a heretic," cried the preacher.

"If I saw the fire before me, I could say or do nothing else but this."

During the month alone in her cell, Jeanne had become much more firm in her certainty of the right course to take—more stubborn in her sin, it seemed to the court.

"If the Church casts you out," thundered Cauchon, "you will be in peril of both body and soul."

"Take care!" she said warningly. "If you do to me as you say, evil will befall *you*, body and soul."

Some of the priests shivered as they sat listening; so many times she had foretold the truth.

But Cauchon was satisfied. No one present could fail to agree that the girl was a stubborn rebel against the faith. She was therefore certainly guilty of the other crimes charged to her; God would never have spoken to a heretic, so her visions must have come from the devil.

It was, however, never satisfactory to punish a heretic without first obtaining a confession of crime. Cauchon was determined to force a confession from

Jeanne. So a week after the hearing just described, he had her brought to meet him in the torture chamber of the castle. It was a terrible place, where stood the rack and other instruments used in those cruel days to force prisoners to speak.

Jeanne looked about her with horror. Why had she been brought here? Where were her Voices? They had told her nothing of this. Then she saw in the shadows the stern face of the Bishop of Beauvais. Beside him was the more kindly looking LeMaitre in his rigid black and white. About the room were nine other priests. The savage-looking men whose trade it was to apply the torture were ready, standing one on each side of the lonely girl.

"Jeanne," said Cauchon sternly, "you refused at the trial to admit many things. You lied about others. You will now tell the whole truth, or you will be placed upon the rack and forced to tell it."

If the Bishop planned to frighten this peasant girl into utter, terrified submission, he failed completely. She looked at him with scorn, and answered with splendid courage:

"Truly, if you tear me to pieces and separate my soul from my body, I will not say more than I have said already; and if I should make some confession, I would always say afterwards that you had forced it from me and that it was not true."

Cauchon was surprised. This warrior Maid was only a woman; he had expected to see her cringe and weep and beg for mercy. He was uncertain now what to do. He had not really intended to put her on the rack. If he were to do so now, she might die, and that would anger the English. And of what use would her words be, if she denied them afterwards?

"Take her back to the tower!" he ordered sharply.

Later, on Saturday, Cauchon called a meeting of thirteen judges to decide whether Jeanne should be tortured. All but three, of whom he was one, voted against it, and he gave up the idea.

A week later came the reply of the University of Paris, approving what that institution considered the noble work of the Bishop of Beauvais. This removed whatever doubts were left in the minds of the judges as to her heresy. But the court did not wish to condemn her without one more of the addresses which they called "charitable warnings." For this she was called before a group of hostile judges, and told at great length that if she would obey the Church she would certainly save her soul and probably her body from death.

But all the learned preacher's reasoning and all his eloquence were broken against the steadfast rock of the courage of this girl. All she would answer was:

"I hold to what I have said already."

"Will you submit to the Church?" angry voices shouted at her.

"If I were at the judgment seat," she answered steadily, "and saw the fagots laid, and the stake, and the torch ready to light the fire—even if I were already in the fire, I would say nothing else than I have said at the trial; nor would I, even unto death."

There was nothing more to be said, after that proud answer.

Back in her tower, Jeanne received the summons to come next day before the court and receive her final sentence.

"It is then," she thought, "that my Voices will do as they have promised, and will save me."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST HOPE

ON the morning of Thursday, May 24, as the gray dawn crept up the sky, Jeanne fell into a troubled sleep. All night she had tossed on her hard bed, now listening to the heavy breathing of her jailers, now straining her ears for a sound of La Hire or Dunois at the gates of Rouen. It is harder to be brave, alone in the dark, than in the presence of enemies, where pride demands courage. When she was alone, she knew that she was horribly afraid. She could not hear her Voices; indeed, sometimes in these last days she had wondered if the priests were right, and if she had been deceived by evil spirits in the form of saints.

All her life she had been taught to believe what the Church and its ministers said. Was she right or wrong in refusing now to submit to its wisdom? All night she had struggled with her doubts and fears; no question was answered when she fell asleep.

She was wakened early by several of the judges, who came to her cell to make a last appeal. Like Cauchon, they were anxious to win from her a confession of wrongdoing and a submission. Unlike Cauchon, most of them sincerely thought that in making such a confession she would save herself. A prisoner who so expressed sorrow for his acts or beliefs was said to "recant."

"Jeanne," said Father Beaupère, "we have come to lead you forth to hear your last warning. If you do not recant, you will be sentenced to death."

"If you are a good Christian," said another, "you will say that you submit all your acts and words to our holy Mother Church."

Sitting wearily on the side of her bed, her head bowed in her hands, the girl made no answer. Father Massieu raised her kindly and led her to the door.

"Believe me," said Loiseleur, "it depends on you, Jeanne, to save yourself. Show your obedience by taking the dress of your own sex and by doing what is told you. Then the Church will protect you, but otherwise you are in danger of death."

Still making no answer, Jeanne went where she was led, to a cart which waited at the gate of the castle, and in which she was to ride to the public hearing of her sentence.

This great event was to take place in the cemetery of the beautiful church of St. Ouen, where there was plenty of room for a crowd of spectators. Two platforms had been built, a large one and a small one. On the larger platform were seated the two chief judges, Cauchon and LeMaitre; with them were a number of less important judges, as well as Cardinal Beaufort, head of the Church in England, and several visiting bishops and abbots. Beside this platform stood the Earl of Warwick and some English generals. The great open space was filled with pushing, eager people—English and Burgundian soldiers, citizens of Rouen, travelers passing through the city. They were all as anxious to see the Maid's disgrace as the Orléans crowd had been to see her glory.

On the smaller platform was a pulpit, where waited the learned priest Father Érard,[1] who was to preach to Jeanne before her sentence was pronounced.

Suddenly the buzz of voices was hushed, as the prison cart rattled up. Led by the priests Beaupère and Massieu, Jeanne climbed the steps of the small platform and sat down upon a stool. The preacher began his sermon. It was full of the cruel accusations and hard names that Jeanne had become used to. She listened patiently while he described her pride and disobedience, her heresy and wickedness; but suddenly she heard words that aroused her old-time spirit.

"Oh, noble house of France," thundered the preacher, "thou art indeed abused! Charles, a heretic who calls himself King, has taken part with a woman defamed and full of dishonor." Then, shaking his finger at his victim, "Jeanne," he shouted, "it is to you that I speak. I tell you that your King is a heretic and a blasphemer."

Jeanne's eyes flashed; the angry color rushed into her pale cheeks.

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[1] ā-rär′.

"By my faith!" she cried, "saving your reverence, I swear to you upon peril of my life that he is the noblest Christian of all Christians, and best loves the faith and the Church. He is not what you say."

Furious at the interruption, Érard turned to Massieu, who stood beside the prisoner. "Make her be silent!" he ordered. But there was no need. Jeanne said no more. Did she think, as she sat through the rest of the long sermon, of how the King she had just defended had deserted her?

The preacher ended his preaching at last. In a gentler tone he asked Jeanne if she would now, as her judges commanded, submit her words and deeds to the Church.

"I will answer you," said Jeanne. "Let a record of all my words and deeds be sent to Rome to our Holy Father the Pope, to whom, after God, I refer them. As for what things I have said and done, I have said and done them for God."

Other priests now pressed around her, urging her to recant. They pointed to the executioner with his cart standing beside the platform, waiting to take her to the stake.

"Will you say that you repent of those things for which your judges blame you?" urged Érard.

Should she yield? After all, obedience was what a Christian owed the Church. They asked only obedience.

"I cast myself on God and our Holy Father the Pope," she cried desperately.

"But the Holy Father is too far away for us to go to seek him. Every bishop has power in his own district to represent the Pope. You must believe what these learned fathers have decided about you. You must submit to the Mother Church."

Still she clung to the fragments of her courage. At any moment, perhaps, there would be a tumult at the gates, and a throng of soldiers, perhaps a cloud of angels, would come to save her. Her Voices had promised it. She refused a last time to recant.

Cauchon could no longer put off the reading of the sentence. He must do without the confession of witchcraft he had so much desired. Slowly, unwillingly, he began to read.

Two sentences had been prepared, one to use if Jeanne recanted, the other to use if she persisted in her refusal to recant. The Bishop began the latter of these. It was a sentence casting her out of the Church, a punishment called "excommunication," and turning her over to the "secular arm," as the state authorities were called in contrast to the church officials.

The Bishop read, slowly. The black-robed priests pressed around Jeanne, pleading with her to save herself.

"Have pity on yourself; do not let yourself die."

"Put on a woman's garments, and your chains will be taken off."

"Recant, and you will be taken to one of the Church's prisons and kindly treated."

The Bishop read, slowly. He had read more than half of the sentence. Jeanne looked at the executioner's cruel face and shivered. The platforms, the judges, the crowds of people swam around her in a kind of mist. Pleadings, promises, threats deafened her. She felt her head grow dizzy, her heart grow weak.

"Do what you are told," urged Érard, "and you will be taken out of prison."

A strange smile, where scorn was mingled with fright and despair, appeared on the girl's face. "You take great pains to persuade me," she said.

The Bishop, still reading slowly, paused. He saw that she was on the point of yielding. And at this moment there came an interruption.

The time had seemed long to the English soldiers, who had not understood a word of what was being said. But now it seemed to them that everyone was trying to save the witch. They would have made short work of her at home in England, they muttered to each other. Angry murmurs began to rise; some stones were thrown at the priests on the two platforms; threats and curses were shouted. An English priest said to Cauchon:

"You are a traitor! You are helping this woman."

"You lie!" cried the angry Bishop. "I act according to my conscience! You shall apologize to me!"

Cardinal Beaufort intervened, reproving his countryman and ordering him to be silent.

Meantime Érard had thrust into Jeanne's hands a paper containing the brief form of words by which she must recant. Massieu read it to her. It said that she would submit to the judgment of the Church; it acknowledged that she had done wrong in leading the King and the people astray; it promised that she would never again carry arms nor dress as a man nor wear her hair cut short.

"Let me wait for counsel," she begged piteously.

"Sign it now, or you will be put to death today," answered the pitiless Érard.

Terrified, despairing, utterly broken, probably not fully understanding all that the paper said, for it was written in learned language, she murmured:

"I would rather sign it than die."

"Sign, then," cried many voices.

"I cannot read or write," she said humbly.

Someone guided her hand to write her name at the bottom of the paper. Her mark, a cross with a circle around it, she made herself.

She smiled as she signed. It must be right to sign, or why would all these good priests say so? Her Voices had not saved her. Well, she must save herself. Her Voices had deceived her. It must be true that they were not from God. She had sinned in following them. Her pride in her mission lay in ruins around her; but she would save her life. Then, perhaps, after she had served out her penance, they would let her go back to Domremy.

Cauchon, relieved, laid down the paper he had been reading and picked up a shorter one. He began to pronounce this second sentence. By it, Jeanne was received again into the bosom of the Church, but, as punishment for her sins, she was to "eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow" in prison forever.

Forever! Then, thought Jeanne, she would no more see the green hills of Lorraine nor the roses in her father's garden. Yet better this hard fate than a disgraceful death. And the prison, she had been promised, would be one of the Church's prisons. There would be women there. As for the bread and water, she did not mind plain fare.

The prisoner was led down from the platform. She had recovered a little of her bravery, and walked steadily. With some of her old directness of speech, she turned to Beaupère and Massieu.

"Now, then, you men of the Church," she said, "take me to your prisons, that I may be no more in the hands of these English!"

But Cauchon had no such idea, nor had he made any such promise. His only promise had been to the English, that he would restore their prisoner. So he cried harshly to Massieu:

"Take her back where you brought her from!"

The priests who had urged Jeanne to recant exclaimed in protest.

"He fails in his duty as a judge of the Church," said one.

"There is no place for repentance in yonder tower," said another. "How can a woman live virtuously among English soldiers?"

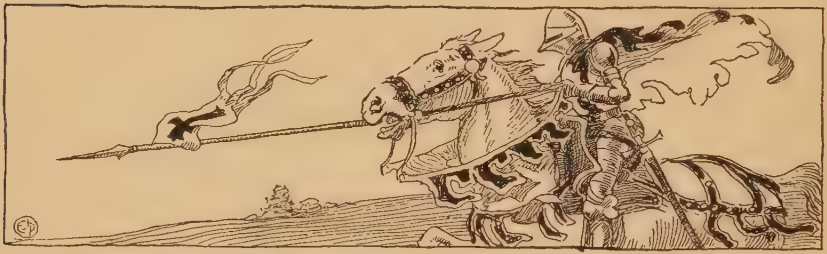
"How can we command her to eat the bread of affliction and drink the water of sorrow if we give her neither?" reflected a third.

But such protests did no good. Indeed, it was hardly safe to make them aloud. Warwick and the English were angry enough as it was; they thought the witch was escaping.

Meanwhile, Jeanne, chained again in her tower, told herself with returning courage that this English prison would hold her but a short time now, only until final arrangements could be made. She was sure of this when, a few hours later, LeMaitre entered the dungeon with several other priests, among them the spy Loiseleur. They brought her a gown sent her by the Duchess of Bedford. Once more she listened patiently while they spoke of the mercy of the Church and warned her not to return to her sins. Obediently she put on the gown, and allowed her hair to be cut so as to be arranged in more womanly fashion.

"I will obey the Church in everything," she said meekly.

She was ready now, as she thought, to be led away to one of the Church prisons. But in a moment, to her terror, the group of priests turned to the door and departed, leaving her, in her woman's dress, at the mercy of her jailers.



CHAPTER XXIX

FIVE MORE DAYS

PERHAPS no prisoner has ever been more utterly miserable and terrified than was Jeanne d'Arc during the two days that followed. Until now, the clothing she wore had kept her safe from the familiarity and abuse of the five coarse soldiers who guarded her. Now she had no such safety. To their insulting words they added blows and harsh treatment, when she resisted them, now trying to embrace her, now pushing her about roughly.

But worse than her misery of body was her misery of mind.

She had received from her judges none of the things that had been promised her. She was still in chains, still in the hands of the English, still in this hideous prison. She had not been permitted to receive the sacrament. It was in order to gain these things that she had signed that paper. She had said that her Voices were not from God, and that she had done wrong in following their commands. But now she was wretchedly confused. Were her Voices from God? If so, she had sinned in denying them. Were they, as the priests said, from the devil? If so, she had sinned in obeying them. How could she know?

Was it right or wrong for her to be wearing this woman's dress, which the Voices had forbidden?

Friday passed unhappily in doubt and fear. Saturday passed. Dark night came on. The jailers in her room, stupid with wine, had fallen asleep. At last there was stillness. She heard the evening bells, and through their chiming, clearly for the first time in many days, came her Voices. She knelt on her hard couch and listened.

"You have done a great wrong," she heard them say. "You have betrayed God and his saints."

"Alas!" she murmured.

"It was to save your life that you denied the truth of your mission. You, who were sent from God, said that in obeying Him you had sinned. God has great pity for you."

The bells ceased. The Voices died away. Jeanne lay on her bed weeping. But she was once again sure of what was right to do. Though the saints had rebuked her, they had comforted her. Soon she fell asleep.

When Sunday morning came, she laid aside the gown that she had taken off the night before. Within reach, perhaps placed there purposely by her jailers to tempt her, was a sack containing the cast-off page's costume. With fine courage she drew on doublet and hose, tunic and leggings. She paid no attention to the rude remarks of her keepers.

The news ran quickly to the ears of Cauchon that Jeanne had fallen back into sin. He had been sure that this would happen; that was why he had left her in the English prison. Now there was no escape for her. Everyone would have to agree that she had brought her fate upon herself, since the Church had received her back as a repentant sinner, and she had failed to obey its commands.

One thing more was needed, to make sure that she not only would lose her life but would die in disgrace. She must be made again to confess that the acts commanded by her Voices had been sinful.

Cauchon sent Beaupère to the prison to see if the news was true. But the English soldiers, angry at the French priests who were, they thought, saving the life of the witch, drove him away. On Monday morning Cauchon went himself; they dared not refuse to let him in with his companions.

They found Jeanne in her old black suit, her face tear-stained, her eyes swollen with weeping.

"Why have you put on these garments, and who made you do it?" demanded Cauchon.

"I put them on of my own accord; no one made me," she answered bravely. "I like a man's dress better than a woman's."

"You promised and swore not to dress so any more."

"I did not understand that I *swore* not to do so," she replied quietly.

"Why have you put them on?"

"Since I must live among men, it is more decent to dress as a man than as a woman." Then, with a flash of daring, she added, "I put them on because the promises made to me were not kept. I have not been allowed to go to mass, and my chains have not been taken off."

"Do you then take back your promise not to wear these garments?"

"I would rather die than live in chains. But," she begged, "if you will let me go to mass, and will take off my chains, and will put me in the right sort of prison where I may have a woman with me, I will be good and obey the Church."

Cauchon changed the subject. "Have you heard your Voices since Thursday?"

"Yes."

"What did they say?"

Jeanne told him how they had reproved her for denying them. "On Thursday," she went on, "I should have answered the preacher boldly, as they told me to, instead of being afraid. He was a false preacher, and said of me many things that were not so. If I said that God did not send me, I should condemn myself, for God did send me. It was from fear of death that I said what I did," she finished, weeping.

"Do you believe that your Voices are Saint Catharine's and Saint Margaret's?" asked the Bishop.

"Yes; theirs and God's." She was again the Jeanne of the many long days of the examination.

Cauchon reminded her that at St. Ouen she had said that all her talk of the saints had been a boastful lie.

"I did not mean to say so," she replied firmly. "If I said so, I spoke untruly. I did not understand that all this was in the paper that I signed. I would rather die at once than be kept any longer in prison. I did wrong to recant, for I have done nothing against God's will. If you wish, I will wear a woman's dress, but I will do nothing else."

She had said enough. Cauchon, departing, passed the Earl of Warwick at the gate. "Farewell!" he said gayly. "Be of good cheer. We shall have her."

Next day, forty judges sat to hear the Bishop's report of this interview. They could see nothing to do but vote against the Maid; she had sealed her fate in those last daring words. They could not vote to put her to death, as the Church had no power to take life. But they voted to turn her over to the secular arm, a decision which meant death as certainly as if they had decreed it.

The shadows of Tuesday evening gathered in Jeanne's tower. She lay on her hard bed, her eyes on the faint streak of sunset light that slid through the narrow window. She knew, from the talk of her jailers, that she would not see another sunset. On that slender, rosy beam her thoughts traveled—back, and back, passing like a bad dream over the five sad months in Rouen; traveled back to the tower at Beaurevoir, and the two kind ladies there; to the Sire d'Aulon, sturdy and faithful in her captivity; to her last stand at the bridge of Compiègne, her crimson cloak blowing in the wind, her white banner waving above her; to the moat at Paris, with Alençon fighting gallantly beside her; to the cathedral steps at Rheims, and her father's proud and happy face; to the wild ride to Patay; to the Tourelles, with La Hire beside her charging at the enemy; to the shores of the Loire, where Dunois waited for a west wind; to the great hall at Chinon, with its many lights and colors and the gentle Dauphin in their midst; to Vaucouleurs, with dear Lassois and rough, stern Baudricourt bidding God speed to her and her two knights; to the green valley of the Meuse, and the hillside with the cattle; to the little church with its sweet bells; to her father's garden, with a great light shining near the church; to the Fairy Tree, and games with Hauviette and Mengette and her brothers; to her mother's face, by the fireside at night; to her mother's voice, teaching a little girl to lisp "Our Father."

Nineteen years there were, all filled with memories. Jeanne turned her cheek upon her hand and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXX

AT DOMREMY

ON a day in early June, Father Frontey sat on the bench beside his cottage door, watching the pigeons strutting in the sunshine. The roses were in bloom in Jacques d'Arc's garden beside the church across the way, but no one was astir outside the little house. Dame Isabelle was inside, nursing her husband, who had fallen ill some weeks ago. Jean was in the field; he had been helping his brother Jacques with the farm, ever since he came home after the siege of Compiègne. Pierre was still a prisoner of the Burgundians; it was hard for a farmer's son to raise the ransom asked for. And Jeannette? No one knew exactly how her fortunes stood. The latest news had come from a merchant who passed through the town on his way to Toul, who said that all Rouen was talking of the Maid's spirit and courage in defying the priests. Public sympathy was with her, he declared, though no one dared to admire her openly for fear of the English.

It was after this traveler's visit that Jacques d'Arc had fallen ill, as a result of strain and suspense. His wife, younger and stronger than he, spent every moment that she could spare from household tasks in the church, praying for her lost daughter.

Father Frontey sighed, his eyes on his breviary.[1] A footstep at his gate made him look up. A stranger in the black and white garb of a Dominican monk was approaching him. He rose.

"Peace to you, brother," he said hospitably.

"And to you. My name is Brother Martin Ladvenu.[2] I come from Rouen."

"You bring news?"

"Sad news for the family of Jeanne d'Arc, called the Maid. But it would be well that you first hear my tidings."

"Let us go within," said Father Frontey, leading the way.

The two priests sat down at a table strewn with manuscripts.

"Now, your news," said the village pastor, a little sternly. "Are you her friend?"

"As much as any man in Normandy dared be, else I should not be here. I was her confessor at the last."

"The last? Is she dead, then?"

Brother Martin bowed, silently. Father Frontey crossed himself reverently; then he rose, and lighted two candles before a little shrine to the Virgin, which hung in a corner.

"We knew, a month since, that she was in grave peril," the old man said, his voice shaking. "Tell me the manner of her passing."

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[1] A Roman Catholic prayer-book.

[2] lȧd-vā-nü′.

A shadow darkened the doorway, as a dark-eyed, slender girl of seventeen darted in, flinging herself on her knees beside Father Frontey.

"So she is dead!" wailed Hauviette. "Alas! I heard your words. I came to bring the altar linen, and paused in the door as I saw a stranger. Alas, my friend! She was so good."

"Control yourself, my child," said the old priest, "and you, too, listen to what Brother Martin has to tell."

So the Dominican began his story. Starting with the events of Thursday in the churchyard of St. Ouen, he told all that had happened down to the last morning of Jeanne's life, when he had gone early to her prison, having been appointed by the Bishop to prepare her for death. He found there the priests Pierre Maurice and Nicholas Loiseleur, trying once more to force her to confess that all her story of the Voices was false.

"They could get nothing from her," said Ladvenu. "All her courage had come back. But when I told her she was to die in a few hours, she broke again.

" 'Alas!' she cried, weeping, 'if I had been in one of the prisons of the Church, this misery would not have happened to me.' She called God to witness that great injustice was being done to her."

"It was! It was!" cried Hauviette. "Oh, that I had been there!"

"You could have done nothing, my daughter," said Ladvenu sadly. "No one could, save Charles with his armies, and even they would have feared to attack the Church. Those of the court who openly favored your friend had been sent away."

"Let the good brother tell his story, Hauviette," said Father Frontey gently.

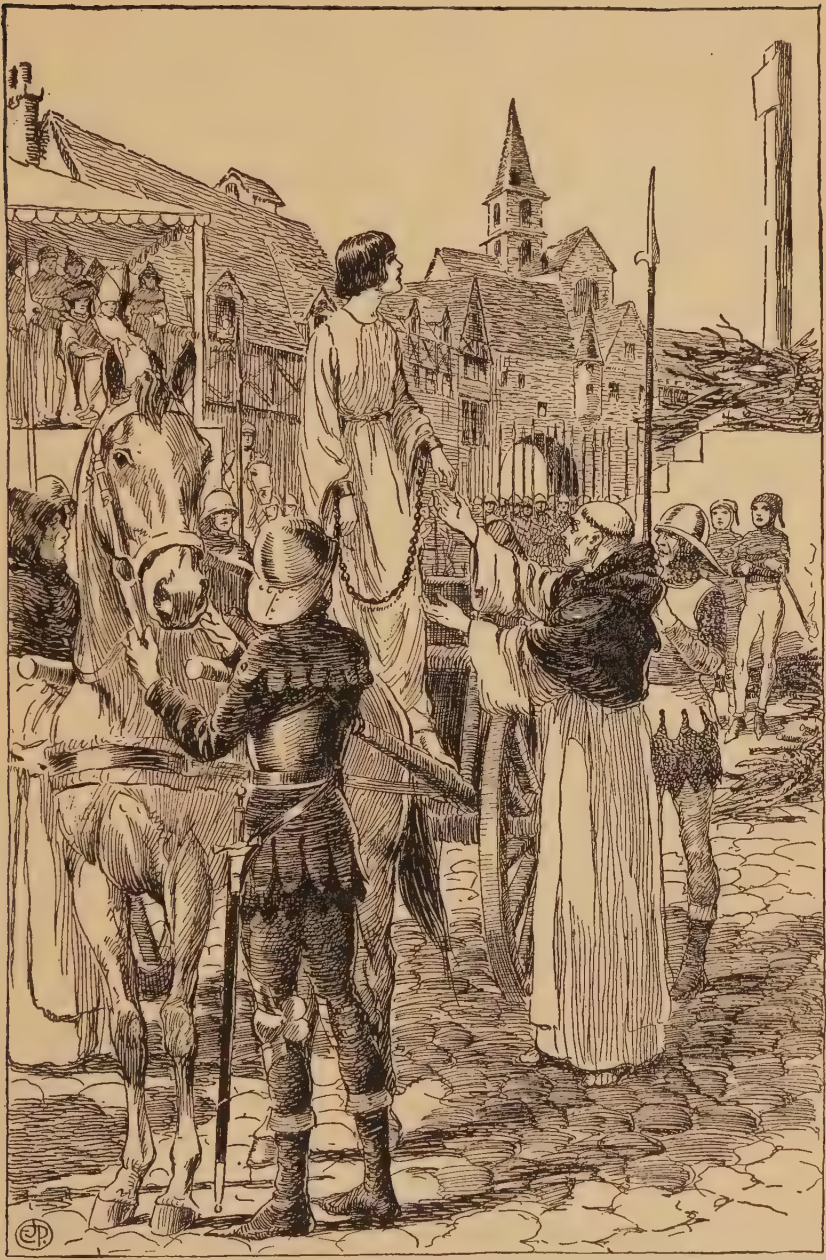
"Two things I remember well that she said before they left me alone with her," went on Ladvenu. "Of Father Maurice she asked a question. 'Master Pierre, where shall I be tonight?' she said. He is a kindly man, and replied, 'Have you not faith in God, my child?' 'Oh, yes,' she said, 'and I know that, God helping me, this night I shall be in paradise.'

"To Bishop Cauchon she uttered the only reproach I heard from her lips. He came in to see that all was being made ready. 'Bishop,' she cried, 'I die through you.' It was true enough."

"Yet, if he thought her a heretic, he but did his duty," said Father Frontey. "And the trial seemed fair enough. We must not judge the servant of God."

"He is no servant of God," cried Hauviette hotly. "He did not think Jeannette a heretic. No one could think so."

"The child is right, I fear," said Brother Martin. "As Jeanne said, he should not have sent her back



Jeanne, dressed in a long white robe, was taken to the public square to the English prison. He is bought with English gold. Well," he resumed, "they left me with her at last. The Bishop gave permission that she should have the sacrament. I sent a priest to fetch it; but he was afraid of the English, and brought it stealthily, irreverently, wrapped out of sight in a piece of linen. I was angry. It was as if Our Lord, too, must tremble before the Earl of Warwick. So I went myself to the nearest church and made the clergy walk with me in solemn procession through the street, carrying candles and chanting psalms. Carrying the holy sacrament, we came through lines of watching people; as we passed by we said to the crowds on either side, 'Pray for her!'

"She wept for joy as I gave her the sacrament. Poor girl, it was the first time in six months that she had received it.

"By this time the executioner's cart and the guards were at the gate. It was nine o'clock. Jeanne, dressed in a long white robe, was taken in the cart to the public square called the Old Market. Father Massieu and I were with her. Eighty English soldiers marched before and behind us, and many others were stationed within the square, keeping back the crowds of people from the cleared space in the center."

Then, with Hauviette's sobs as an echo of his words, Brother Martin went on to describe the three platforms set up in the square. On one, in great pomp and splendor, sat Cauchon, Winchester, and

LeMaitre, with other bishops and priests. On another were the city magistrates of Rouen. The third was occupied by the preacher of the day, Nicholas Midi. To this third platform Jeanne was led, and made to sit down upon a stool to listen to the long sermon.

"I doubt if she heard much of it," said Brother Martin. "She sat with her eyes looking far off, as if she saw things that the rest of us could not see. 'Go in peace,' the preacher said at last; 'the Church can no longer protect you.' Then the Bishop pronounced the sentence, declaring that because she had returned to her sins she was cut off from the Church, and turned over to the secular arm for punishment—to the English, he might as well have said, for that was what it meant."

"And did she say nothing—nothing at all?" pleaded Hauviette.

"Yes. She fell upon her knees in prayer. She prayed for mercy upon her judges and upon the English."

"'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,'" murmured the old priest of Domremy.

"She begged forgiveness of everyone whom she had wronged," went on Ladvenu, "and asked the priests to say masses for her soul."

"She never wronged anyone," said Hauviette indignantly.

"So thought many who heard her, and wept as they listened to her prayers. But the English soldiers, who speak no French and who therefore did not understand her words, grew impatient. One called out roughly to Father Massieu, who stood beside her trying to comfort her, 'Ho, priest! do you mean to make us stay here till dinner time?' "

"Brutes!" cried Hauviette.

"Nay, my daughter," said the gentle old priest, whom years had made wise. "They were afraid of her, and so they hated her. Fear always makes men hate each other."

Brother Martin went on with his story in a voice that choked as he told how two soldiers seized the Maid and hurried her off to be chained to the stake, which was set on a high foundation of stone, with steps leading up to it. So great was the haste of the English that the magistrate of Rouen did not take time to pronounce sentence, waving her to her death merely with a gesture.

"She thought of others more than of herself," the friar said. "As they fastened the chains, she looked across the crowded square to the windows and housetops filled with people. 'Ah, Rouen, Rouen!' she cried, 'I fear that you will suffer for my death.' Then she asked for a cross. Many of the hard-hearted Englishmen were laughing, but one soldier of them all had a kind heart. He broke a stick into two pieces, tied them together in a cross, and handed it up to her. She kissed it and put it in her bosom.

"Meanwhile, a brother of my convent, named Isambard, hearing her words, hurried to the Church of St. Saviour and brought from there the cross that is carried in the procession. He mounted the steps to the stake and held it to her lips. Her face lighted with joy, and she thanked him, asking him to hold it so that she could see it till the end. When the executioner came with his torch, the good brother still stood on the steps, so as to hold the cross by its long staff before her eyes."

"And the people?" asked Hauviette. "Did they not cry out in pity?"

"Everywhere were tears and sobs. The stern judges themselves were weeping; many of them hurried away. Some said that even Cauchon had tears in his eyes, though I greatly doubt it. The square was half empty before the fire was lighted; people could not bear to stay to see the end."

"Alas, that I could not be beside her!" sighed Father Frontey. "I who have been her father in God from childhood should have comforted her last hour."

"As far as was in my poor power," said Ladvenu, "I tried to do as you would have done. I stayed at her side, praying for her passing soul, until the flames began to mount." He spoke with the simple courage of the priest who is always at his post in time of need or danger. "Then again she forgot herself. 'Master Martin!' she cried. 'Take care! Go down! The fire!'

She would not be satisfied until I left her and sought safety. I stood near, beside Isambard with the cross, and could hear her calling upon her saints, but at the last calling only upon Jesus."

Soon, then, he said, the dreadful scene was over. The square was empty. The executioner had gone to scatter Jeanne's ashes in the waters of the Seine. As Ladvenu and Isambard walked sadly toward their monastery, a haggard man, hatless, his garments disarranged, went running past them, crying over and over to everyone he met, "We are lost! We have burned a saint!" The two monks recognized him as secretary to the king of England.

"That afternoon," he ended, "the executioner sought us out, begging us with tears to tell him what he should do to save his soul."

"There will be more remorse than his before this deed is forgotten," said Father Frontey.

"Can Cauchon feel remorse?" asked the girl scornfully, through her tears.

"He is a man, after all, my child," answered Ladvenu. "One who has served the Church, however wrongly, must have a conscience. The rewards he wins from the English can taste but bitter to his tongue."

"I was thinking," said the older priest, "of Charles of Valois. How can he wear his crown and bear to think that he, a king, let the girl who placed that crown upon his head be destroyed by his enemies?"

"He is no king," cried Hauviette hotly. "He is a miserable coward, crown or no crown."

"And yet," queried Brother Martin, "I wonder what Jeanne herself would have said. To the very last she defended him. And today, in paradise, she is happier far than he."

"Or than we who mourn her," said Father Frontey, rising heavily. "Come, Hauviette, child. If this good brother will go with us to Jeanne's people, we will try to tell them his story as gently as we may. God grant her His eternal rest!"

"And may his light perpetual shine upon her!" responded the Dominican.

CHAPTER XXXI

AFTERWARD

TWENTY-FIVE years have passed. It is 1456. In twenty-five years many things have happened.

Jeanne's brother Jacques, still a farmer, lives on in Domremy, in the house his father left him at his death, soon after Jeanne's. Her brother Jean has risen to be governor of Vaucouleurs, where once the Maid stood before Baudricourt. Her mother, old and broken, lives in Orléans with her son Pierre, who receives from that city a pension for his sister's sake. The brothers call themselves Jean and Pierre du Lys, using the name and the rank won for them by the deliverer of Orléans. Durand Lassois, however, assumes no airs of nobility; he is still a laborer at Burey.

Cauchon is dead. He was never made Archbishop of Rouen. The public hatred of him ran too strong. The English gave him only the little bishopric of Lisieux. Dying suddenly, he was afterwards found guilty of thefts from the Church, and was after his death excommunicated and dishonored.

Others of Jeanne's judges are dead, several of them having died miserably.

La Trémouille, the crafty counselor, is dead. An attempt to murder him, undertaken by friends of the banished Richemont, resulted in the favorite's captivity and his disappearance from court until his death twelve years ago.

The English are gone from France, holding now only one seaport, Calais. Charles VII is known as Charles the Victorious, though the victories have been won by Dunois and Richemont. With the death of the Duke of Bedford, four years after Jeanne's, English affairs in France fell into disorder; and when the Duke of Burgundy broke with England and joined with France, it was not hard to drive the English out. Jeanne's work is finished.

It is July, 1456. In the hall of the Archbishop's palace at Rouen has just been read a proclamation stating that the trial of Jeanne a quarter-century ago was unjust, the charges against her false, and the entire proceedings of that year, 1431, null and void. Jeanne's memory is to be held blameless. In Rouen there are to be processions in her honor, and in the Old Market, where she suffered, a memorial cross is to be erected to keep her ever in remembrance.

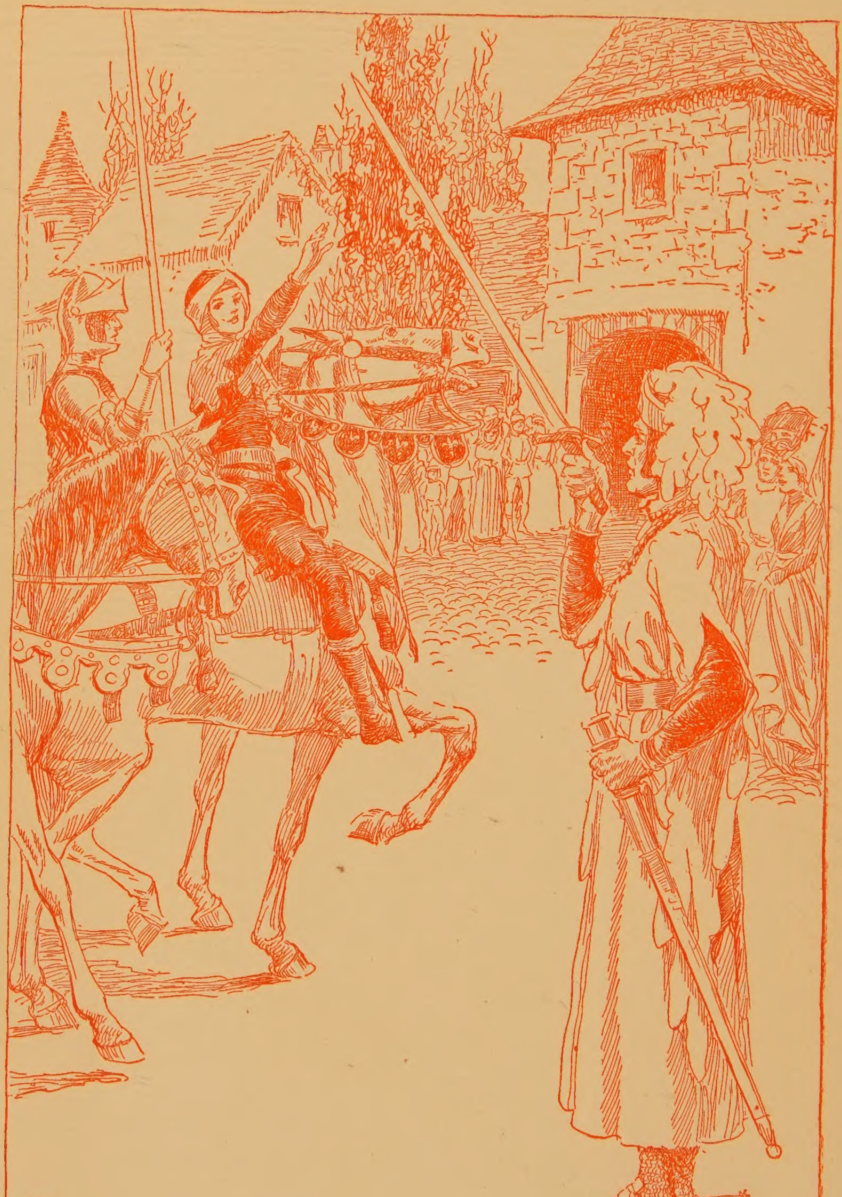
How has this come about?

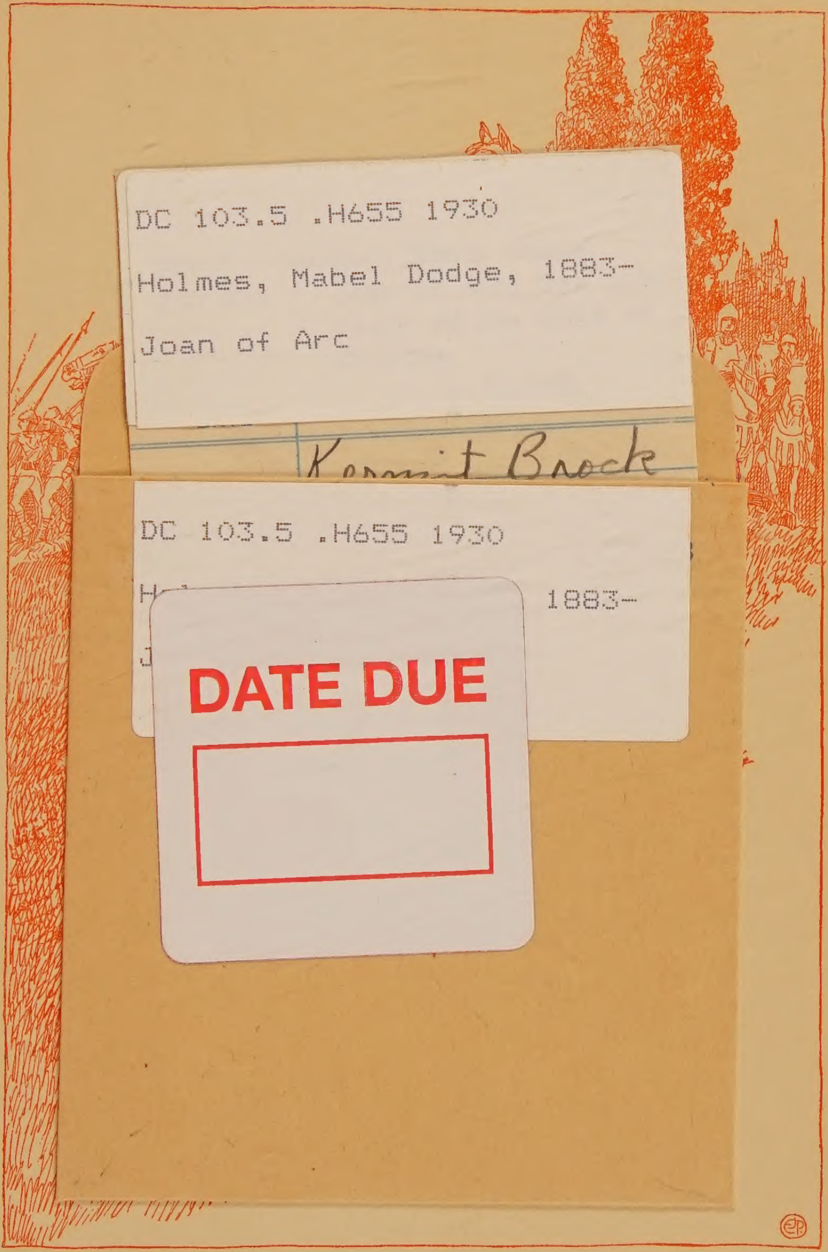
Six years ago, Charles VII, who now sat firmly upon the throne of France, began to feel uneasy at the thought that his crown had been placed upon his head by a heretic and a witch. It seemed to cast disgrace upon both crown and King. So he set in motion an investigation, which, moving slowly and cautiously, has finally, in this year of 1456, proved that Jeanne was all she claimed and that Charles's crown was, therefore, given him from heaven. This investigation is known in history as the Rehabilitation.

All the friends who might have helped Jeanne at her first trial, in Rouen, bore witness at the second, in Paris. By order of the King, the suit against Jeanne's judges was brought by her mother and her two brothers. To name the witnesses would be to retell her story. Men and women from Domremy who had known her in childhood told what they recalled of her; and Lassois and DeMetz and Poulengy, her first followers; and Pasquerel and D'Aulon and De Contes, her closest attendants at Orléans and after. Dunois and Alençon spoke for her, and citizens from Orléans and Tours. All those who were still alive who had figured at the first trial bore witness to what had really happened there. Of these, Ladvenu was one.

So, in the words and minds of men and women, Jeanne lives again. Her figure in its white armor shines in the sunlight; her white horse prances, her white banner waves triumphantly. As she said of that banner, so history will say of her:

"She had borne the burden; she had earned the honor."





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